The role of socioeconomic welfare in the prevalence of severe vitamin D deficiency, vitamin B12 deficiency and glucose metabolic changes in population of Karaj, Iran

Mahsa Houshdar*1, Seyed Mehdi Samimi Ardestani2, Seyed Saeed Sadr3

1. MD. CEO of Houshdar Medical Technology Co, Iran. (Corresponding Author: mhooshdar@gmail.com)
2. M.D, Associate professor of psychiatry, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Science, behavioral science research center, Imam Hossein Medical Center, Tehran, Iran
3. MD, assistant professor of psychiatry, Shahid Beheshti University Of Medical Science, behaviour science research center, Imam Hossein Medical Center, Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

Introduction: Online Medicare is a method in which parts of a medical process, whether its diagnostics, monitoring or the treatment itself will be completed by using online services. At the first step the students were registered for using the system. They participated in estimating depression scale; anxiety scale and clinical interview by online medical care system. Subsequently, the lab examination tests were performed on persons specified by the system. The lab examinations include: serum level of vitamin D3&4, serum level of vitamin B125&6, fasting blood sugar7&8, HbA1c7&8, thyroid function test9&10 and CBC. All of the students were solely treated by vitamins or minerals therapy and/or treatment of medical problems (such as hypothyroidism).

Methods: For detecting the role of socioeconomic welfare in the prevalence of the diseases, we implement the system in a lower middle class boy’s state high school, and in an above average boy’s state high school and in an above average boy’s private high school. The prevalence of severe vitamin D deficiency, hypoglycemia, impaired fasting glucose level and vitamin B12 deficiency were compared in students who lay in different socioeconomic situation.

Results: Severe vitamin D deficiency is significantly higher in above average neighborhoods than low middle class neighborhoods with ρ value = 0.024 < 0.05. Significant difference in vitamin B12 deficiency, hypoglycemia and impaired fasting glucose were seen in deferent high schools, but it is not related to socioeconomic situation.

Conclusion: In Karaj, Iran, in societies with better socioeconomic situation, we can find higher severe vitamin D deficiency, it can be due to urbanization, living in apartment, over protection, preferring indoor games to outdoor games.

Declaration of Interest: None.

Key words: Depression, Anxiety, Vitamin D Deficiency, Socioeconomic.

Introduction

Online Medicare is a method in which parts of a medical process, whether its diagnostics, monitoring or the treatment itself will be completed by using online services(1). For detecting the role of socioeconomic welfare in the prevalence of the diseases, we implement the system in a lower middle class boy’s state high school, and in an above average boy’s state high school and in an above average boy’s private high school.

Methods

At the first step the students were registered for using the system. It was not mandatory and not free. They participated in estimating depression scale; anxiety scale and clinical interview by online medical care system. During this estimation, we
could find out about the existence and severity of depression and anxiety in each one of the participants. Also we could determine the consequent needs of each one, such as supportive therapy\(^1\) in mild depression or anxiety, need to be visited by psychologist in moderate cases\(^1\), need to be visited by psychiatrist in moderate-severe cases\(^1\), need to be visited by psychiatrist and psychologist in severe cases and need to perform medical lab examination tests (2). The lab examination tests were performed on persons specified by the system. The lab examinations included: serum level of vitamin D(3-4), serum level of vitamin B12\(^{5\&6}\), fasting blood sugar(7-8), HbA1c(7-8), thyroid function tests(9-10) and CBC. All of the students were solely treated by vitamins or minerals therapy and/or treatment of medical problem (such as hypothyroidism).

**Results**

Descriptive findings related to variables including mean and standard deviation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 1</th>
<th>Category 2</th>
<th>Category 3</th>
<th>Category 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vit D &lt;10</td>
<td>Vit B12 &lt;200</td>
<td>Hypoglycemia</td>
<td>Impaired Fasting Glucose Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower middle class boy’s state high school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above average boy’s state high school</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above average boy’s private high school</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.** The prevalence of severe vitamin D deficiency, vitamin B12 deficiency and glucose metabolism changes in different neighborhoods.

**Chart 1.** The prevalence of severe vitamin D deficiency, vitamin B12 deficiency and glucose metabolism changes in different neighborhoods.
Statistical Results:
- Severe vitamin D deficiency is significantly higher in above average neighborhoods than lower middle class neighborhoods with p value = 0.024 < 0.05.
- Hypoglycemia is higher in the state high schools in above average neighborhood than state high schools in lower middle class neighborhood and private high school above average neighborhood.
- Severe vitamin B12 deficiency is significantly higher in the state high schools in above average neighborhood than state high schools in lower middle class neighborhood and private high schools above average neighborhood.
- Impaired fasting glucose level is lower in the state high schools in above average neighborhood than state high schools in lower middle class neighborhood and private high schools above average neighborhood.

Conclusion
Reasons of higher severe vitamin D deficiency in above average neighborhood than lower middle class neighborhood:
- Urbanization: Apartment living is very popular in above average neighborhoods. Most of these apartments have not enough outdoor space available, thus direct sunlight availability is rare
- Over protection: In above average neighborhoods the students are not permitted to exit home alone. Transferring to school is mostly performed by private vehicle or school vehicle. Naturally they do not have enough direct sunlight exposure time
- Change in habits: Computer games, computer and internet is primary entertainment of students in above average neighborhoods, outdoor games such as football is not as popular as a few years ago. Thus, there is not enough interest for exposure to sunlight.
- The other results cannot be interpreted by available information; the future studies can help interpreting this data.

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