

DIABETES STUDIES IN FIJI

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Diabetes mellitus has become a major public health problem in Fiji at present. The first major epidemiological/clinical study in 1964-65 showed an prevalence of diabetes as 3% (Indian 5.7%, Melanesians 0.6%). Juvenile diabetes and diabetic ketosis were extremely rare. The clinical presentation differed in the two major ethnic groups.

In the National Diabetes and Cardiovascular Diseases Study in 1980 the overall prevalence of diabetes was 10%; a three fold increase in the previous 15 years. The rates were higher in Indian than in Melanesians and there was a marked rural-urban difference in the latter but not in Indians. The prevalence of Impaired Glucose Tolerance was similar in the two ethnic groups. Those engaged in physical activity had lower prevalence of diabetes.

A Gestational Diabetes Study was completed recently. Using O'Sullivan and Mahan Criteria the overall prevalence of gestational diabetes was 2.7%.

An incidence Study is currently in progress. The preliminary data suggest that diabetes in both ethnic groups is associated with increased mortality and increased health care utilization.