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Does Food Neophobia Influence Dietary Diversity and Treatment Adherence Among People with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus?

Abstract:

This study examines the effect of food neophobia on dietary diversity and treatment adherence in people with type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM). The study involved 35 patients with T2DM treated at the Internal Medicine Outpatient Clinic of Çankırı State Hospital and 35 healthy individuals from the same clinic. Demographic characteristics, Adherence Scale to Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Treatment, Food Diversity Score and the Fear of New Foods Scale were recorded using a questionnaire during face-to-face interviews. HbA1c levels were obtained from the hospital's electronic database. When the dietary diversity score (DDS) and food neophobia scale (FNS) were evaluated, no significant relationship was observed between the control group and individuals with T2DM ($p > 0.05$). The food diversity score (mean = 4.0) of neophobic individuals with T2DM was found to be significantly lower than that of neophilic (mean = 7.0) and neutral (mean = 6.7) individuals ($p < 0.05$). The treatment adherence scale score of neophobic individuals with T2DM (mean = 111.8) was significantly higher than that of neophilic (mean = 59.5) and neutral (mean = 83.0) individuals. A high score indicates poor adherence and lack of expected behaviours. A significant positive (moderate) relationship was observed between the food neophobia score and the treatment adherence scale score of individuals with T2DM, while a significant negative (moderate) relationship was observed with the food diversity score ($p < 0.05$). These findings suggest that food neophobia may negatively affect T2DM management and hinder healthy eating habits. Interventions reducing food neophobia may help increase dietary diversity and improve treatment adherence in individuals with T2DM.

Keywords: adherence to treatment, diabetes mellitus, dietary diversity, food neophobia, type 2 diabetes

Biography: I work as a Research Assistant in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics and am a PhD candidate at the University of Health Sciences with a 4.00 GPA. I have received specialized training in scientific phytotherapy, nutrition approaches to gluten-related disorders, and stem cell culture. I have presented my research at national and international scientific platforms and published in peer-reviewed journals. I have also served as a scholar and advisor in national research projects. My aim is to contribute to the advancement of nutritional science and public health throughout my academic journey.