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Exploring the Psychosocial Needs of Adolescents with Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus: Insights for the “emoTICare” Psychological Intervention

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Abstract

Introduction: Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus (T1DM) is a chronic disease with increasing incidence in childhood and adolescence, significantly affecting both physical and psychosocial health. The complex management of T1DM, particularly glycemic control, can be disrupted by the emotional and physical changes during adolescence. This study aimed to analyze the psychosocial profile of adolescents with T1DM and the importance of psychological interventions for this population. **Method:** A cross-sectional study was conducted with 114 adolescents (11–17 years) with T1DM from Spain and Latin America. Clinical, sociodemographic, and psychological variables were assessed, including quality of life, self-concept, illness threat perception, social problem solving, emotional awareness, and resilience. Descriptive statistics, mean comparisons, and correlations were performed. **Results:** Over 50% of participants reported physical complications from T1DM (e.g., vision difficulties: 24.6%). 39.5% showed significant psychopathological symptoms. 79.8% scored below the 50th percentile on psychological well-being, and 74.6% had low family support. Low self-concept (69.3%) and poor self-perception of controllability (61.4%) were common. Results showed that low self-concept, poor emotional awareness, and ineffective problem-solving were linked to higher psychopathology, poorer quality of life, and low resilience. Avoidant or impulsive problem-solving strategies correlated with more emotional psychopathology and behavioral issues. Boys scored higher in quality of life and self-concept. **Discussion:** Adolescents with T1DM face significant psychosocial challenges, highlighting the need for multidisciplinary interventions focusing on emotional regulation, social skills, and family dynamics. This study supports the implementation of specific intervention programs, such as the emoTICare platform, designed to address these psychological aspects.

Keywords: Adolescence, chronic disease, illness adjustment, psychosocioemotional health, psychological treatment