

12. Barriers to Accessing Diabetes Medications During the Sudan Conflict: A Cross-Sectional Study

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BACKGROUND: Diabetes Mellitus (DM) is a chronic condition with severe complications if untreated. Continuous access to diabetes medications is essential, particularly in conflict settings where challenges like infrastructure damage, supply chain disruption, and economic instability hinder care delivery. Since the outbreak of armed conflict in Sudan in 2023, the country's health system has experienced substantial disruption. This study aimed to assess the challenges faced by patients with diabetes in accessing medications during the 2024 armed conflict in Sudan, focusing on Khartoum and Gezira states and other affected regions. **METHODS:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in Sudan between April and August 2024. Data were collected using a self-administered online Arabic-language questionnaire from 314 participants across multiple Sudanese states, particularly those directly affected by the conflict (Khartoum and Gezira) and indirectly affected states (Gedaref, White Nile..etc.). Sociodemographic characteristics, diabetes type, medication access, health status, and conflict-related impacts were assessed. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Data were analyzed using R software.

RESULTS: Among the 314 participants, 55% were female, with a mean age of 53 years (SD ± 16). Most participants (66%) had type 2 diabetes, and 47% reported diabetes-related complications. Overall, 84% reported that the conflict negatively affected access to diabetes medications. Insulin (46%) and oral hypoglycemic agents (34%) were the medications most difficult to obtain. The main reported barriers were pharmacy closures (53%) and financial constraints (42%). Additionally, 62% of participants reported using alternative remedies during medication shortages. **CONCLUSION:** The armed conflict in Sudan significantly disrupted access to diabetes medications, with financial constraints, medication shortages, and pharmacy closures being the primary barriers. These findings highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to ensure the availability and affordability of essential diabetes medications during humanitarian crises.

Key Words: Diabetes Mellitus, Health Services Accessibility, Armed Conflicts, Sudan, Cross-Sectional Studies.

PIE CHART REPRESENTING THE EFFECT OF WAR ON DIABETES MEDICATIONS ACCESSIBILITY

