**DIETARY PRACTICES AMONG ELDERLY DIABETIC PEOPLE IN MAURITIUS- PRE AND POST DIAGNOSIS**

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**Abstract**

***Education is a cornerstone of diabetes care. Unless adequate education is provided, self-care, which is an essential part of the management of diabetes, cannot be ensured –*WHO**

Food intake is a frequent concomitant of Type 2 diabetes among older adults. However, little is known about the food intake of this group of people. The purpose of this paper was to evaluate pre and post dietary practices of the elderly diabetic people age 65 years and above in Mauritius and provide recommendations about diet in the management of type 2 diabetes. A cross-sectional study of the diabetic patient attending Area Health Centers around Mauritius was performed. Through multi-stage sampling procedures, four Area Health Centers were identified and one hundred randomly selected diabetic elderly patients who volunteered to participate in the survey was recruited. An interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to elicit information about their previous dietary habits, present food intake as well as lifestyle factors and nutritional knowledge. Quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientist, SPSS software 17.0 version. Food security concepts provided the theoretical framework to make sense of the qualitative data. The result showed that there was an insignificant change in the pre and post dietary practices of the elderly diabetic people. Despite having a good nutritional knowledge, the elderly tend to consume foods according to their affordability and availability instead of what is healthy for them. The findings add to the literature by identifying food choices of the Mauritian elderly diabetic people which are multifactorial. Another important element which emerged from the findings is the commonly held beliefs and misconceptions about food intake which is a serious impediment in the management of the disease. There is an urgent need to address food security issues for this vulnerable group of people. The study reveals the gap in the availability of basic health education services to the population and recommend the ‘customizing’ of nutritional guidelines and food grouping models which would be very beneficial for the management as well as in the prevention of complications link to Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus.

**Keywords –** Type 2 Diabetes, diabetic, food security, customizing nutritional guidelines, food grouping model