

## Letter to the Editor

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# Addressing the Gaps in Disaster Preparedness Education for Diabetic Patients: A Critical Need in Aging Population

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People with diabetes and related conditions may be vulnerable to disruptions caused by disasters. Evidence shows that this condition increases unpreparedness of patients in disasters.<sup>1</sup> We investigated diabetes disaster preparedness of 371 diabetic patients in Hamadan, located in the west of Iran, via a cross-sectional study and convenience sampling method from November 2020–January 2021.

Data were collected by a questionnaire that contained questions on demographics and risk perception, disaster awareness, and disaster preparedness among participants.

Results showed that the mean age of participants was 55.25 (SD=12.79) years. Despite the vulnerability of diabetic patients in disasters, only 14 of 371 participants in the study had prepared a waterproof emergency bag in case of disaster, and only 1 participant had all the items needed for the emergency bag.

Despite emphasizing for disaster preparedness education for diabetic patients,<sup>2</sup> less than 25% of the diabetic patients in this study had received disaster preparedness education. Also, 56 patients (15%) had received emergency bag preparation education (training resources are shown in Table 1). Notably, 87.5% of those who received disaster preparedness education and emergency bag preparation education had emergency bags ready. Among trainees, compared to those who received no education about disaster preparedness, a higher percentage reported being aware of their region's disaster management plans, considered themselves better prepared, and attributed disaster outcomes to a lack of preparedness.

Significantly, participants older than 40 years old had received less education. In this study, 73% have comorbidity. Older patients, particularly those aged 65 and above, are vulnerable, and education increased disaster preparedness and maximized patients' resilience.<sup>3</sup>

Population aging, increasing diabetes prevalence,<sup>4</sup> inclination to receive disaster preparedness training, and enhancing preparedness with educational interventions<sup>5</sup> highlight the necessity of planning for disaster preparedness education. In this study, the resource of emergency bag preparation education with the highest frequency was provided by health care center staff. Reinforcing other sources and increasing the use of mobile phones (i.e., designing apps on this subject) could be beneficial in educating diabetic patients on disaster preparedness.

**Table 1.** Training resources frequency for emergency bag preparation\*

Training resources	Frequency (%)
Health care center staff	19 (33.93)
Specialist doctor	12 (21.43)
Radio and television	18 (32.14)
School	3 (5.36)
Magazines, pamphlets, and brochures	2 (3.57)
Social media	8 (14.29)
Others	9 (16.07)
Total	56 (126.79)**

\*56 participants (15% of diabetic patients) have received education regarding the preparation of an emergency bag.

\*\*The total exceeds 100% because participants mentioned more than 1 training resource.

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**Author contribution.** The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: study conception and design: MS and ZS, data collection: ZS, analysis and interpretation of results: AD-I and ZS, draft manuscript preparation: MS

and ZS. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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