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First International Diabetes Conference 2025

Maskey R

Professor and HOD Internal Medicine, BPKIHS

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The First International Diabetes Conference 2025 was successfully held on March 1, 2025, at the Royal Tulip Hotel, Lalitpur, Nepal. Organized by the Dhana Yoga Foundation with support from Nepal Health Corps, the Ministry of Health, and the Diabetes and Endocrinology Association of Nepal, the conference revolved around the theme, “Innovations in Diabetes, Treatments, and Monitoring: Enhancing Quality of Life.”

Background

There is a rapid epidemiological transition of diseases from communicable to non-communicable diseases. Among four major NCDs, Diabetes Mellitus (DM) is one of the most common one. DM is a chronic metabolic disease due to high level of glucose in the blood that can damage heart, eyes, and kidneys. At present, there are approximately 830 million people living with DM and the majority of them are not under medication with 1.6 million deaths in 2021. Unfortunately, most of them are from the low-and middle-income countries.¹

Diabetes is a challenge for public health having an increasing trend in South East Asia (SEA). The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) predicts that there will be increased of DM patients by 69% (152 million) by 2045. The SEA has about 17% of people with diabetes worldwide, but about 51% of people of them are undiagnosed that means 1 in 2 adults living

with DM are undiagnosed. In 2021, about 750 thousand people died of DM. On the other hand, the region spent only 10.1 billion USA, representing 1% of the total spent worldwide. In SEA region, India has about 74 million DM patients while 1.1 million in Nepal.^{2,3} These scenarios present the urgent need of investment in DM diagnosis and comprehensive treatment package at all levels of healthcare facilities in resource-limited countries.

The burden of DM is surging and is an endemic disease in Nepal with lots of challenges. According to the IDF, the prevalence of DM among the adults is 6.3% representing about 1.1 million cases.⁴ A study by Shrestha et al. (2022) found the prevalence of DM to be 8.5% in Nepal with higher odds of DM occurrence among older population, men, and people living in the cities.⁵

A study report produced by HERD International in 2016 reported that the prevalence of pre-diabetes in Nepal was 19.5% and approximately more than 95% of the diabetic patients were reported type-2 diabetes.⁶

The STEPS survey 2019 revealed the prevalence of raised blood sugar was 6.8% among adults age 15-69 years. Unfortunately, about 74% of them did not know their blood glucose level. On the other side, only 11.8% got their medicines from the government health facilities.⁷

In the remote parts of Nepal, the government

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Robin Maskey, Professor and HOD Internal Medicine, BPKIHS, Dharan, Nepal. Email id: drmaskey@gmail.com.

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facilities are providing health services and there is an urgent need to expand the diabetes care and management services in health facilities in the rural, mountainous, and Himalaya parts of Nepal. There are several challenges in diabetes care and management in Nepal. Nepal lacks adequately trained human resources. For instance, the number of endocrinologists who involve in diabetic care are few in Nepal. On the other hand, metabolic syndrome and obesity are gradually surging in Nepal. Overweight has been common among adults. Studies found that the proportion of obesity and overweight are 7.2% and 32.9% respectively. Another study in the tertiary hospital found the prevalence of metabolic syndrome in diabetic patients was 82% as per IDF criteria. In addition, referral system, public and patient awareness and data collection are other major challenges in the health landscape.^{8,9}

The people living in the rural municipalities are more likely to be unaware of their blood sugar and people with low-economic status hardly measure their blood sugar level. So, there is a serious diagnosis and treatment gaps in Nepal. To assist in improving the diagnostic and treatment in the rural setting, Dhana Yoga Foundation has been conducting diabetes screening camps and helping the most underserved in different remote municipalities of the country and is on a process to establish a diabetes research center in each province with piloting the first one in the Karnali Academy of Health Sciences.

International Diabetes Conference by Dhana Yoga Foundation and Diabetes and Endocrinology Association Nepal in Kathmandu, Nepal will bring national and international researchers, practitioners and experts from all provinces who will share

knowledge, generate collaborations and discuss novel strategies for the prevention and management of diabetes in Nepal. The different sessions, including continuing medical education and rigorous discussion will equip participants with updated information and potential solutions to existing barriers in the field of diabetics' care and endocrinologist scope in Nepal. This conference is an explorative foundation to set up a diabetes research center in each province in the long run.

Key Organizers and Leadership

Dr. Sachin Maskey, President of the Dhana Yoga Foundation, spearheaded the initiative to promote diabetes awareness, education, and management in Nepal. The event was led by Professor Dr. Robin Maskey, the Chairman of the Diabetes Conference 2025, a renowned expert in endocrinology and diabetes research.

Highlights of the Conference

The conference featured an array of distinguished speakers from Nepal, India, and the USA, covering diverse topics in diabetes management, treatment strategies, and innovative research.

Key Sessions and Speakers

1. Dr. Raju Pant (Nepal): Addressed basal and bolus insulin therapy, transition from IV to SC insulin, enteral and parenteral nutrition in diabetes, and steroid therapy management.
2. Dr. Ajay Chaudhari (India): Spoke on the limitations of HbA1c as a diabetes marker and advancements in Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM), Omnipod, Insulin Pumps, and Automated Insulin Delivery (AID) systems.
3. Dr. Meredith Hawkins (USA): Focused on diabetes in low-resource settings,

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- Fibrocalculous Pancreatic Diabetes (FCPD), and malnutrition-modulated diabetes.
4. Prof. Dr. Ralph A. DeFronzo (USA): Presented on the Ominous Octet, combination therapy, cardiovascular effects of diabetes medications, and the comparison between Tirzepatide and Semaglutide in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus.
 5. Prof. Nihal Thomas (India): highlighted on an approach to diabetes in young.
 6. Prof. Dr. Nitin Kapoor (India): Explored diabetes in individuals with normal BMI, cardiometabolic risks, and the role of ketogenic diets.
 7. Prof. Dr. Robin Maskey (Nepal): highlighted on an ABCDE approach to diabetes and magic of insulin therapy panel discussion.
 8. Prof. Dr. Bhagawan Koirala (Nepal): He highlighted cardiovascular complications in diabetes and coronary artery disease prevention. Dr. Deepak Malla provided insights into diabetes care in Nepal, discussing patient adherence and innovative treatments. Prof. Dr. Sanjib Kumar Sharma shed light on KHDC project, while Dr. Gampo Darji from WHO outlined global diabetes trends and Nepal's role in advancing diabetes care.

Special Guests & Closing Remarks

Dr. Rajesh Sambhajirahao Pandav, WHO Country Representative, emphasized global efforts in diabetes prevention. Prof. Dr. Robin Maskey and Dr. Sachin Maskey concluded the event, underscoring the urgent need for improved diabetes care and fostering collaboration among healthcare professionals.

Key Takeaways & Benefits

The conference provided immense value for medical students, doctors, and healthcare

professionals by offering insights into:

- Latest advancements in diabetes treatment, including insulin pumps, GLP-1 receptor agonists, and CGM technology.
- Real-world clinical cases and public health policies for better patient management.
- Networking opportunities with experts and organizations to drive research and policy changes.

The First International Diabetes Conference 2025 marked a significant step forward in diabetes care in Nepal, fostering collaboration, innovation, and awareness in the fight against diabetes. With such dedicated efforts, Nepal is moving toward a future of improved diabetes management and patient outcomes.

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