Cambridge International

Professional Research Thesis

Titled

The effect of food on diabetics.

Researcher

ABUJELA SALEM ABURAS

Supervisor signature

2025

Thanks and appreciation

All thanks and appreciation, first and foremost, to my late father—may Allah have mercy on him—who was the first symbol of perseverance and willpower.

To my dear mother, may the Almighty grant her a full recovery, and to my siblings.

And finally, to my beloved wife, who has been my greatest support, and to my daughter, the apple of my eye, Makkah.

SUMMARY

Diabetes is considered one of the most widespread chronic diseases in the modern era, affecting millions of people around the world. This disease is characterized by its long-term impact on individuals' lives, as it may be accompanied by serious health complications if not properly managed. Although diabetes affects many people, its impact varies significantly from one person to another, due to differences in the type and nature of the disease, as well as the level of commitment to treatment and health guidelines.

Diabetes is classified into two main types: Type 1 and Type 2, each with distinct characteristics and causes. Type 1 diabetes is considered more severe and challenging, as the pancreas fails to produce insulin entirely or sufficiently. Insulin is the hormone responsible for regulating blood glucose levels, and its absence or deficiency causes a continuous rise in blood sugar levels. In contrast, Type 2 diabetes is characterized by the body's resistance to insulin or a deficiency in its production. In this case, the pancreas produces insulin but in insufficient quantities to meet the body's needs. Despite the presence of insulin, the body struggles to use it effectively.

As a chronic condition, diabetes requires ongoing management to reduce the risk of complications that may affect various body systems, such as the heart, kidneys, retina, and nerves. In this regard, many doctors and healthcare professionals dedicate their efforts to offering guidance and advice to patients on how to live healthily with diabetes, especially regarding dietary and lifestyle habits.

This research aims to address the topic from multiple perspectives, offering a detailed overview of the causes and types of diabetes, along with the genetic and environmental factors that may contribute to its development. It will also explore unhealthy habits that may worsen the condition, such as poor diet and lack of physical activity, and propose ways to reduce these risks through a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

One of the key points this study will focus on is how to improve the function of pancreatic beta cells, which play a fundamental role in insulin production. The research will examine how to strengthen these cells through dietary methods and healthy lifestyle practices that can significantly enhance blood glucose control.

In the same context, the study will highlight the importance of the Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) test, which serves as a vital indicator for assessing long-term blood sugar levels. This test helps both patients and

physicians understand how well blood glucose is being managed and provides a clear indication of treatment success or the need for adjustment.

The primary goal of this research is to provide valuable and reliable information that empowers diabetes patients to gain a deeper understanding of their condition and make informed life and health decisions. We also aim to offer practical, applicable solutions that help patients manage this chronic disease effectively through well-thought-out lifestyle and dietary changes.

The study Problem:

The problem addressed by this study lies in the urgent need to change societal habits and individual lifestyles in a way that contributes to improving the health of people living with diabetes. This can be achieved by emphasizing the importance of physical activity and a healthy diet in managing the disease. Through regular physical exercise, it is possible to reduce the need for high doses of insulin by promoting natural blood sugar burning mechanisms. Improving lifestyle is a fundamental part of preventive treatment for diabetic individuals, where continuous awareness can lead to shifts in societal thinking and behavior, particularly through avoiding fast food, which significantly contributes to elevated blood sugar levels.

There is also a pressing need to strengthen community awareness programs aimed at improving individuals' health literacy regarding diabetes and its prevention. This includes educating people on how to protect themselves from the risk of developing diabetes and guiding them toward adopting healthy lifestyle choices that enhance public health overall. Such awareness should not be limited to those already diagnosed with the disease, but should also extend to individuals at risk, helping to reduce the incidence of diabetes in society.

This study aims to highlight the importance of changing community lifestyle habits as an effective means to reduce the impact of diabetes. It also seeks to shed light on the educational needs of patients, particularly regarding nutrition, physical activity, and strategies to reduce the reliance on high doses of insulin, ultimately contributing to improved health and quality of life.

The importance of studying:

Diabetes is one of the major health challenges facing society in the modern era. It is considered a chronic disease that significantly impacts the lives of patients and society as a whole. Its effects are not limited to those directly affected but extend to the entire healthcare system due to the serious health complications that may arise from the disease, such as heart disease, kidney disease, and diabetic retinopathy, leading to increased mortality and morbidity rates. Despite the presence of various global and local health policies aimed at the prevention and care of diabetes patients, the disease remains a global health issue that requires increasing and effective attention from all parties involved.

The importance of this study lies in shedding light on how to improve the lives of people with diabetes through awareness and lifestyle changes. A healthy diet and physical exercise are among the key factors in improving blood sugar levels and reducing the need for high doses of insulin. Through this study, we aim to assess the level of awareness and knowledge among diabetic patients about disease management and coping strategies, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of current insulin-based treatment methods and how to reduce patient dependence on insulin.

The study also contributes to enhancing community health awareness, aiming to change misconceptions and unhealthy habits that may exacerbate the disease, such as the consumption of fast food, which poses a real threat to individuals at risk of developing diabetes. By providing appropriate awareness programs, we can help reduce the spread of the disease, especially in communities lacking sufficient knowledge about effective prevention and management of diabetes.

Given the importance of empowering patients with self-knowledge, this study also aims to assess the educational needs of patients, helping them make better decisions about their health and manage their condition effectively. Educating patients on daily diabetes management, such as preventing diabetic foot and the importance of regular blood sugar monitoring, enhances their ability to improve their quality of life and reduce the associated risks.

Therefore, this study is a crucial step towards improving the quality of life for diabetes patients and protecting individuals at risk of the disease by providing essential information aimed at changing dietary and physical habits, thereby improving healthcare for this segment of society.

Objectives of the study:

- *Studying the impact of living and psychological factors on the progression of diabetes, with a focus on the influence of daily habits such as diet and mental health on disease development.*
- *Analyzing the role of genetic factors in the onset of diabetes, in addition to the environmental influences and unhealthy lifestyle habits that contribute to worsening the condition.*
- *Highlighting the impact of unhealthy dietary patterns (such as fast food consumption) on the aggravation of diabetes-related complications, including kidney failure, gangrene, and heart problems.*
- *Examining how gestational diabetes affects the health of pregnant women and their fetuses, and how its complications can be prevented through medication and improved nutrition.*
- *Improving the lifestyle of diabetic patients by implementing a healthy, balanced diet based on calorie counting, along with reducing insulin doses through physical exercise as an effective tool.*
- *Studying the effect of sugars and carbohydrates on increasing blood glucose levels, and providing solutions to minimize their impact on patients.*
- *Establishing dietary and therapeutic guidelines aimed at improving blood sugar levels and avoiding related complications, while proposing practical solutions to implement these guidelines in daily life.*

Study hypotheses and questions:

Research Hypotheses:

- *It is expected that an unhealthy diet, such as frequent consumption of fast food, contributes to the worsening of diabetes symptoms and increases the risk of developing the disease.*
- *Physical exercise is expected to have a positive effect on the condition of diabetes patients, as it helps lower blood sugar levels and reduces dependence on insulin.*
- *Improving lifestyle through dietary and physical modifications is anticipated to lower blood sugar levels and enhance the quality of life among diabetic patients.*
- *Regular physical activity may reduce the need for insulin among patients with type 2 diabetes, thereby helping to regulate blood glucose levels naturally.*

Research Questions:

- What is the relationship between nutrition and diabetes?
- How does an unhealthy diet affect the progression of diabetes?
- What is the impact of fast food consumption on blood sugar levels?
- What is the relationship between carbohydrate intake and increased glucose levels in diabetic patients?
- How does physical exercise affect diabetes?
- To what extent can exercise contribute to improving the condition of diabetic patients?
- How can lifestyle be improved to help lower blood sugar levels?

Study Approach:

The descriptive analytical method was used to investigate the impact of diet on diabetic patients.

The limits of the study:

Spatial boundaries: The State of Libya.

Time limits:2025-2005

Study plan:

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework and Scientific Concepts

Section One: What is Nutrition?

- *First: Definition of Nutrition*
- *Second: The Role of Nutrition in the Human Body*
- *Third: Healthy Nutrition and Protein Groups*
- *Fourth: Healthy Nutrition with Vegetables and Fruits*

Section Two: Nutritional Balance

- *First: Carbohydrate Balance in the Diet*
- *Second: The Harmful Effects of Carbohydrate Deficiency Relative to the Individual's Daily Requirement*
- *Third: Protein Balance in the Diet*
- *Fourth: The Balance of Minerals in the Diet – Between Health Benefits and Risks*

Chapter Two: The Impact of Nutrition on Diabetes

Section One: The Impact of Diet on Type 1 Diabetes

- *First: The Relationship Between Nutrition and Genetic Factors in the Onset of Type 1 Diabetes*
- *Second: The Direct Impact of a Sugar-Rich Diet on Type 1 Diabetes Patients*
- *Third: Nutritional Strategies That Help Improve the Management of Type 1 Diabetes*

Section Two: The Impact of Diet on Type 2 Diabetes

- *First: The Role of Fiber-Rich Foods in Improving Glucose Levels in Type 2 Diabetes Patients*
- *Second: The Effect of Reducing Simple Carbohydrates on the Health of Type 2 Diabetes Patients*
- *Third: Preventive Nutritional Strategies to Resist Type 2 Diabetes*

Chapter Three: An Introduction to Understanding the Relationship Between Nutrition and Diabetes

Section One: The Relationship Between Nutrition and Diabetes

- *First: The Relationship Between Sugar Intake and Diabetes*
- *Second: The Relationship Between Starch Consumption and Diabetes*
- *Third: The Impact of Physical Activity on Diabetic Patients*

Section Two: Diabetes

- *First: Types of Diabetes*
- *Second: Psychological Stress and Its Impact on Diabetic Patients – What is the Relationship Between Diabetes and Mental Health?*
- *Third: Depression*

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework and Scientific Concepts

Section One: What is Nutrition?

First: Definition of Nutrition

Nutrition *refers to any substance consumed to provide support for a living organism. Food is usually of plant, animal, or fungal origin and contains essential nutrients such as carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, or minerals. The substance is ingested by a living being to provide energy, sustain life, or promote growth.*

Animals exhibit specific feeding behaviors that meet the needs of their metabolism and are highly adaptable, having evolved to obtain food from various ecosystems. In ancient times, humans obtained food through two primary means: hunting and gathering, and later agriculture. Geographical and cultural differences have led to the development of diverse cuisines and culinary practices, including the use of herbs, spices, techniques, and unique dishes.

Today, diet has a wide-reaching impact on many political and social issues, including sustainability, biodiversity, the economy, population growth, water supply, and access to food. The ***right to food*** *is a fundamental human right derived from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which recognizes the right to an adequate standard of living and freedom from hunger.*

Due to the essential nature of these rights, ***food security*** *is often considered a top international political priority. One key global goal, for instance, is the eradication of hunger by 2030. This objective is monitored by*

international organizations such as the ***International Food Protection Association****, the* ***World Resources Institute****, the* ***World Food Programme****, and the* ***International Food Information Council****.*

Second: The Role of Nutrition in the Human Body

Food provides the human body with the essential substances it needs for growth, tissue repair, and the regulation of the function of organs and bodily systems. What we consume directly affects our health—healthy nutrition helps prevent the onset of certain diseases and supports recovery from others.

Nutrition is a science that explores the relationship between food and the activities of living organisms. This includes food intake, waste elimination, energy release, and biosynthesis processes. Food and drink supply the body with energy necessary for all vital functions, including maintaining a constant internal temperature of 37°C, which is ideal for bodily processes. The energy derived from food allows humans to perform various activities—whether physical movements or mental tasks such as studying, reading, or playing sports.

Moreover, food provides the body with materials essential for building and repairing tissues. Thus, a healthy diet is always beneficial in protecting against or limiting the impact of diseases. On the other hand, unhealthy eating habits increase the risk of various illnesses—both in the short and long term.

Definition of a Healthy Diet

A healthy diet is one that provides energy in a way that supports proper bodily function. Consuming a balanced and complete diet that includes all the essential nutrients is vital for maintaining good health.

What Is a Healthy Diet?

A healthy diet is a balanced and varied diet that includes all the fundamental nutritional components required by the body. It encompasses the six main food groups: proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and water.

Healthy Nutrition and the Starch Group

This group includes foods rich in carbohydrates, such as grains, rice, and whole wheat. Whole grains contain higher amounts of fiber, vitamins, and minerals compared to refined grains. Examples of whole grains include wheat, corn, bulgur, and barley.

The recommended serving sizes of starches are approximately:

- *One slice of bread (about 40 grams)*
- *Half a cup of wheat, barley, semolina, or bulgur (75–120 grams)*
- *Half a cup of cooked porridge (about 120 grams)*
- *Two-thirds of a cup of breakfast cereal flakes (about 30 grams)*

Grains are an excellent source of dietary fiber, which promotes a feeling of fullness. Fiber is a type of carbohydrate, often referred to as "bran", that cannot be digested by the human body. It passes through the intestines while absorbing water, which facilitates bowel movement. The benefits of ***dietary fiber include:***

1. *Reducing the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.*
2. *Helping to lower blood cholesterol levels.*
3. *Aiding in weight loss and weight management.*
4. *Preventing constipation.*

Conclusion:

This study has highlighted the importance of nutrition in the prevention and management of type 2 diabetes. Scientific research has shown that diet plays a pivotal role in influencing the disease and the development of its complications. By examining the impact of dietary habits on both type 1 and type 2 diabetes, it has become evident that a healthy diet can significantly enhance the body's response to insulin and regulate blood glucose levels. The study also demonstrated that effective nutritional strategies can help prevent the disease, such as reducing the intake of simple carbohydrates, increasing the consumption of fiber-rich foods, and choosing healthy fats.

Additionally, the study emphasized the role of nutritional awareness in helping diabetic patients make informed dietary choices that improve their ability to manage the disease and enhance their quality of life. Adopting a balanced diet alongside regular physical activity is an essential step toward preventing type 2 diabetes and reducing its associated risks.

In light of the findings, the importance of continuing research on the impact of nutrition on both types of diabetes is clear, with the goal of developing innovative and effective dietary strategies tailored to individual needs and offering practical, applicable solutions. Furthermore, educational and awareness programs regarding the link between nutrition and overall health should be intensified to raise awareness among individuals and communities about the importance of taking early preventive steps to curb the spread of diabetes.

In conclusion, proper nutrition is not merely a tool for improving diabetes management—it is a cornerstone of good health and long life, and it must be an integral part of preventive strategies aimed at reducing the prevalence of this chronic disease.

Results:

1. *The study results indicate a significant global increase in the number of people diagnosed with diabetes, rising from 200 million in 1990 to 830 million in 2024. This reflects a substantial surge in the incidence of the disease. It is observed that this increase is faster in low- and middle-income countries compared to high-income countries, highlighting the impact of socioeconomic factors such as unhealthy lifestyles, rising obesity rates, and limited access to healthcare and treatment in these regions.*
2. *The analysis revealed that more than half of individuals with diabetes in 2022 were not taking the medications prescribed for managing the disease. This points to major challenges in accessing appropriate treatment and essential healthcare resources, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. These countries recorded the lowest diabetes treatment coverage rates, indicating a clear gap in the provision of basic healthcare for those affected.*
3. *Diabetes-related complications are among the most severe global health issues, as the disease can lead to blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks, strokes, and lower limb amputations. Studies show that diabetes and its related kidney diseases caused over two million deaths in 2021, underscoring the urgent need for improved prevention, early diagnosis, and effective treatment. Furthermore, elevated blood glucose levels contribute to approximately 11% of deaths from cardiovascular diseases, emphasizing the strong link between diabetes and heart health.*
4. *Regarding the prevention of type 2 diabetes, the findings indicate that following a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and avoiding tobacco use are key factors*

that can contribute to preventing or delaying the onset of the disease. Emphasizing a fiber-rich diet and limiting the intake of added sugars and simple carbohydrates are effective nutritional strategies for diabetes prevention.

5. *Additionally, the study demonstrated that diabetes management can be achieved through a healthy diet, regular physical activity, adherence to prescribed medications, and regular check-ups for early detection of complications. These practices help reduce health risks associated with diabetes and delay the development of serious complications.*
6. *In conclusion, the results of this study highlight the need to intensify efforts to curb the spread of diabetes, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, by improving access to treatment and healthcare, and providing necessary awareness about prevention and the importance of lifestyle changes.*

Recommendations:

- Enhance awareness programs about diabetes prevention in local communities, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

¬ Improve access to healthcare and appropriate treatment for diabetes patients in developing countries.

¬ Support health policies that encourage a healthy lifestyle, including proper nutrition and regular physical activity.

¬ Increase diabetes treatment coverage by making prescribed medications affordable.

¬ Strengthen regular screenings for early detection of diabetes and its complications.

¬ Encourage patients to regularly monitor their blood glucose levels and adhere to prescribed treatments.

¬ Develop health strategies aimed at reducing obesity rates and providing environments that support healthy living.

¬ Improve early diagnosis and treatment of diabetes complications, such as kidney diseases and heart conditions.

¬ Promote cooperation between governments and international organizations to provide the necessary resources to reduce the spread of the disease in high-risk areas.

¬ Support ongoing scientific research to develop new and effective treatments for diabetes and its complications.

The reviewer:

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