

The Association Between Economic Status and Diabetes in the Community-Dwelling Elderly in Asia

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Objectives: Diabetes is increasing fast especially in developing countries with the economic globalization. In developing countries the nutrition transition paradox also has emerged with the phenomenon of both underweight and obesity in the poor people. In this study the association of economic status with glucose intolerance will be examined in Asian countries.

Methods : Study population consisted of 103 community-dwelling elderly subjects aged 60 years or older in Thang Kwang (Thailand), (M: F=45:58, 69.0 years), 235 ones Lahanam (Lao PDR) (M: F=96:139, 69.9 years) compared with 175 elderly aged 60 years or older in Tosa (Japan) (M: F=80:95, 72.8 years). DM and impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) were diagnosed by WHO criteria. The economic status was classified by a wealth ranking way by local authorities into three groups, low, moderate and high according to their possession.

Results : The prevalence of DM % in the low/moderate/ high economic status were 27.9/ 14.9/ 20.8% in Laos, 25.0/ 10.3/ 34.7 % in Japan, and 13.6/ 18.8/ 21.4 % in Thailand respectively. Low economic group had higher prevalence of DM than moderate one ($p<0.05$) in Laos. Low and high economic groups had higher prevalence of DM than moderate one ($p<0.05$, $p<0.001$) in Japan. There was no significant difference among the economic groups in Thailand.

Conclusion : The association of economic status with glucose intolerance was shown in Asian countries. For the prevention from increase of obesity and DM/IGT in vulnerable people, it is important to recognize that not only the high but also the low economic status may be the high risk for diabetes and we should pursuit the causes in each of them to prevent diabetes and its complications.