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A Comprehensive Analysis of the Effect of a Native Diet on the Prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes in the West Indies, Primarily the Bahamas

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Abstract

Introduction: *The Bahamas is an archipelagic nation with an estimated population of 389,000, which is predominantly of African descent, around 85-90% of the population. The Ministry of Health has only reported on the incidence values of type 2 diabetes and prediabetes per surveyed year. However, no major research has been done to ascertain the underlying factors. This study therefore was designed to investigate if there is any relationship between dietary intake, obesity and the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in The Bahamas. In order to correctly understand the reason for obesity in The Caribbean, the cultural dimension must be understood. Most Caribbean people associate unhealthy native food with love and home-positive emotions. Another aspect to be explored would be the relationship between food that is fostered from childhood. This knowledge will aid in any form of community-based interventions.*

In this regard, it should be a top regional and national priority to uncover key factors for this high rate of diabetes and offer preventative solutions. This paper will examine one possible effect - a native diet - on the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the West Indian region, with a focus on The Bahamas.

Methods: *The Bahamas can be separated into urban regions and family islands which are less developed. Therefore, each family island and different areas of the more urban regions would have to be visited. The Bahamas' STEPS survey model would be employed, which is a stratified multi-stage cluster sample design with a population-based survey of adults aged 25-64 that were diagnosed with type 2 diabetes or prediabetes. A consent form to ensure informed consent will precede the questionnaire. Special consideration will be made to ask specific questions regarding common Bahamian dishes that are vastly unhealthy.*

Results: *As of 2017, the percentage of the population in The Bahamas that has been diagnosed with diabetes was 13.9%, and with the addition of prediabetic patients, the percentages have risen to 19%. Due to the relationship between diabetes and obesity, it can be surmised that the main cause for Bahamians contracting this metabolic disorder is a sedentary lifestyle coupled with a diet heavy in carbohydrates and seafood.*

Conclusions: *Since the Bahamian diet is a mixture of the diet of the American South and The Caribbean as a whole, an in-depth analysis would provide data that can be applied to other populations.*

Keywords: *Diabetes mellitus type 2, Bahamas, STEPS survey model.*