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Effectiveness of Traditional Treatments of Diabetes in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

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ABSTRACT

Diabetes is the second leading cause of death in Pohnpei – next only to heart disease. However, households in Pohnpei are struggling to make ends meet and find it difficult to afford hospital treatments. The objective of this study is to assess the effectiveness of selected traditional treatment methods for diabetes using local plant products. We hypothesize that the traditional treatment methods of diabetes could also be effective.

Data was collected through interviews and discussions with 17 diabetic patients who have undergone different forms of treatments, and with five medical practitioners. Effects of five treatments were explored: lime and lemon leaf treatment (T1), soursop leaf treatment (T2), hospital treatment (H), hospital + noni leaf treatment (H+T), and no treatment or control (C). Current, mean health condition (0, very poor – 5, perfect) of patients that have undergone the various treatments are as follows: T1 = 3.3, T2 = 2.5, H = 0.6, H+T = 2.0, C = 2.0. Patients that have undergone the T1 and T2 treatments also gave the following assessment of their treatment: T1 mean = 2.0, T2 mean = 2.6.

Data collection and analysis is continuing but information gathered so far leads us to accept the hypothesis and to recommend that the traditional treatment methods for diabetes be seriously considered in the current effort to tackle diabetes in Pohnpei.

Key Words: Diabetes, Traditional Treatment, Soursop, Lime, Pohnpei

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