

# ORAL HYPOGLYCAEMIC DRUGS A FORGOTTEN CAUSE OF SERIOUS HYPOGLYCAEMIA

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## SYNOPSIS

23 diabetic patients with hypoglycaemia were admitted over 8 months to one medical unit at the Singapore General Hospital. 14 were on oral hypoglycaemic drugs. All 14 patients had warning symptoms of hypoglycaemia but only 1 knew of the significance of these symptoms. Most of them were elderly. There is a need to balance the risks of hypoglycaemia with the potential benefits of euglycaemia in this group of patients. The need for patient education in this group should not be forgotten.

## INTRODUCTION

Hypoglycaemia is a well known complication of treatment in diabetic patients. Diabetics on insulin are usually warned of the risks of hypoglycaemia and are taught to carry sugar with them and also alert cards (eg MEDIC-AWAS). However the incidence of hypoglycaemia is difficult to estimate and precipitating factors are difficult to identify. A prospective study was carried out on all diabetic patients admitted with hypoglycaemia to one medical unit at the Singapore General Hospital. The aim was to identify the factors involved in causing hypoglycaemia severe enough to require inpatient hospital treatment.