

Prevalence of Diabetes Mellitus Amongst the *Bhargavas* in India

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ABSTRACT It has been estimated that India has the largest number of diabetics in the world and the incidence is rising. Many communities and minority groups, are known to be particularly vulnerable to diabetes mellitus with the prevalence rising as high as 50% in the Pima Indians of North America. One sub-group amongst the Hindu Brahmins in India, the Bhargavas are also believed to be particularly prone to diabetes. This study attempts to verify this high prevalence and analyze the influence of social factors like marital alliance, food habits, lifestyle etc. A household study covering 50% of the 519 listed Bhargava households in the city of Jaipur was carried out using a suitably structured interview schedule. The study is based on previously diagnosed Type 2 diabetes. 42.3% Bhargava households had one or more known diabetic. The overall prevalence was 16.7%. Pedigree analysis shows that 58% households had at least one primary relative with diabetes. A significant contributing factor can be the practice of surname endogamy and marital alliances within closely related gotra (clan) sub-groups. The social custom pertaining to endogamy in marriages can be an important factor in determining the high prevalence of diseases like diabetes.

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