LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Diabetes and depression—is there a link to the HPA axis?

Dear Sir,

It was with much interest that I read the article by Cosgrove et al. [1] about increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes in people with depression. It has been shown that in depression, there is an increased activity of hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, resulting in increased cortisol [2]. It is well-known that patients with Cushing’s disease can commonly develop depression and they are also prone to develop diabetes. Studies by Lac and Chamoux [3] have shown that sleep deprivation in shift workers increased levels of salivary cortisol. Meerlo et al. [4] showed that sleep restriction alters the HPA response to stress. Overactivity of the HPA axis can cause stress initially and later on a depressive disorder. It would be interesting to look at the patients in your study as to whether they had any history of sleep deprivation causing increased cortisol levels and whether this could be the link between the diabetes and depression.

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References