

Long-term sulfonylurea use tied to impaired awareness of hypoglycemia

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The prevalence of impaired awareness of hypoglycemia (IAH) is high among patients using sulfonylureas long term, according to a study [published](#) in the July/August issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Hsiang-Ju Cheng, M.D., from the National Cheng Kung University in Tainan, Taiwan, and colleagues investigated the [relationship](#) between duration of medication use and prevalence of IAH among patients with insulin-treated or sulfonylurea-treated type 2 diabetes. Analysis included 898 patients (41.0 percent insulin users; 65.1 percent sulfonylurea users).

The researchers found that overall, IAH prevalence was 41.0 percent using the Gold questionnaire and 28.2 percent using the Clarke questionnaire among insulin users, and 65.3 and 51.3 percent, respectively, among sulfonylurea users.

For sulfonylurea use, prevalence increased with longer duration, whereas it decreased with the duration of insulin use. Five or more years of sulfonylurea use was significantly associated with threefold increases in the odds of IAH, regardless of the criteria used. Regular blood glucose testing and retinal examinations cut odds of IAH in both insulin and sulfonylurea users.

"The reasons for the differential association of hypoglycemia history with IAH between [insulin](#) users and sulfonylurea users need more study," the authors write.

More information: Hsiang-Ju Cheng et al, Long-Term Sulfonylurea Use and Impaired Awareness of Hypoglycemia Among Patients With Type 2 Diabetes in Taiwan, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2024). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.3129](#)

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