

# The association between lifestyle, socio-economic factors and depression-diabetes co-morbidity

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# BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project report entitled “**The association between lifestyle, socio-economic factors and depression-diabetes co-morbidity**” submitted by **Riya Parikh** bearing the **MIS No: 202216007**, in completion of his project work under the guidance of **Ms. Yesoda Bhargava** is accepted for the project report submission in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Technology in Electronics and Communication Engineering in the Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, Indian Institute of Information Technology, Pune, during the academic year 2020-21.

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## Abstract

**Background:** Diabetes and depression are major contributors to health burden globally. Diabetes and depression are associated with each other, and often coexist. This diabetes and depression co-morbidity (DDC) tends to reduce the quality of life of a diabetic individual and impedes with the clinical treatment. Thus, early identification and diagnosis of DDC is crucial to improve the health outcomes among the diabetic patients.

**Methods:** This work explores the association between of demography, lifestyle factors and social economic position with DDC. Logistic Regression is used to explore this association.

**Results:** Women were found to have higher odds of DDC. Adjusted for other variables, higher BMI, absence of exercise and lower socio-economic position was found to be associated with higher odds of DDC.

**Discussion:** Most research around diabetes and depression co-morbidity focus on lifestyle but our study underscores the importance of considering the socio-economic position for a more holistic understanding of DDC. The insights from the study could potentially help in extending the discussions on disproportionate burden of DDC in the lower socio-economic background population.

**Keywords :** Diabetes, Depression, Co-morbidity, Socio-economic position, Logistics Regression, Machine Learning,

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The global burden of Diabetes is rising rapidly [1]. Diabetes prevalence was projected to reach 366 million by 2030 [2], but by the year 2014 it had already crossed the projection affecting 422 million [3, 4]. Diabetes severely impacts patients' quality of daily life [5] and has a negative effect on their psychological well-being [6]. In fact, the prevalence and risk of depression and depressive symptoms increases significantly with diabetes [7, 8, 9, 6]. On the other hand, diabetes is also a consequence of chronic depression as demonstrated by recent longitudinal studies [3, 10, 11]. Not only this, depression worsens the diabetic patients' health outcomes, such as higher level of A1c hemoglobin is observed in a diabetic individual with depression [7, 12].<sup>1</sup> This coexistence of diabetes and depression, is often referred to as the *Diabetes-Depression Comorbidity* (DDC) [13].

DDC is associated with higher risks of physical disability [14], morbidity [9], increased health care costs [8] and mortality [15]. Additionally, it often causes loss of functional role later in life leading to physical limitations, triggers a sense of helplessness and impacts the patient social well-being negatively [6]. Moreover, the presence of both health conditions presents challenges to clinical treatment and demands a more mindful and holistic approach to manage it.

Given the rising burden of DDC and its adverse effects on patients health, it is vital to explore the risk factors associated with it. Such exploration could help in gaining actionable knowledge to mitigate the onset of, and complications associated with DDC. To this end, in this we aim to explore the association between DDC and demographic,

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<sup>1</sup>A1c test measures the amount of glucose attached to the hemoglobin in the bloodstream



lifestyle and socio-economic factors to understand how these may explain the variation in the risk of DDC. Rest of the work is organised as following.

Chapter 1 provides a general introduction to the thesis.

Chapter 2 explains motivation behind pursuing the project .

Chapter 3 describes and discusses the research background and synthesizes findings from the past literature.

Chapter 4 explains our proposed methodology.

Chapter 5 discusses results and their interpretation.

Lastly, Chapter 6 presents the conclusion of the research and briefly discusses the future work.

# Chapter 2

## Motivation

Individuals with Diabetes-Depression comorbidity (DDC) often rate their health lower as compared to those with other chronic conditions [3, 16]. Moreover it impairs their quality of life, increases complications and often leads to poor health management. DDC precipitates physical disability, increases morbidity and mortality burden and could cause catastrophic health expenditures [3, 17]. While in the clinical environment, DDC is diagnosed using several tests, in the non-clinical environment, it is important to understand how it may be related to physiological, lifestyle, and socio-economic factors. Such an understanding could potentially help in early identification of DDC or those at higher risk of it, thereby slowing down the deterioration in their quality of life. Moreover, it could also promote investigation of strategies related to treatment, management and prevention of DDC both at population and individual level. Thus, this research work attempts to explore the association between lifestyle, demographic and socio-economic factors and the diabetes-depression comorbidity.

# Chapter 3

## Literature Review

Diabetes and depression are often diagnosed together [7, 6] implying that diabetic individuals may be more prone to depression [9, 3, 18, 19] or depressive people are at a higher risk of diabetes [11, 8]. Many longitudinal studies [9, 14, 15, 20, 19] and systematic reviews [3, 8] suggest a causal relationship between diabetes and depression. Some of which focused on the precedence of depression to the onset of diabetes [18, 19, 15, 14] and vice-versa [11, 14] . Whereas [19, 8] found diabetes to be risk factor to subsequent depression. Nonetheless, the evidence reflects that the co-existence of diabetes and depression, referred to as the diabetes depression comorbidity (DDC) is quite prevalent.

Existing studies have demonstrated the relationship of DDC with age, gender [6, 9, 14, 15, 20, 19, 11, 18] marital status, education attainment [6, 9, 15, 20, 19, 18, 11], ethnicity [20, 18] and BMI [20, 11]. However, the role of socio-economic factors remains unclear and under-explored. Taking account of socio-economic factors in DDC is vital because it is significantly related to patients' health outcomes and comorbidities presence [21, 22]. Marmot [23] has shown that the health of a person is considerably influenced by environment in which he/she grows up and works. Hence, it is crucial to investigate how the socio-economic position (SEP) may be associated with DDC, adjusting for other lifestyle and demographic factors.

Even though few studies have attempted to explore SEP with DDC, the metric used by them to measure/indicate SEP appears to be conceptually weak. For instance, [20] cursorily assessed participants' SEP by measuring the respondents' ability to meet his/her family expenses. However, from the suggestions on SEP measurement provided by sys-

tematic mapping review by Leone, et. al [21], the indicator used by [20] appears weak. It is argued that, SEP indicator of an individual requires knowledge about income, education, employment status, house ownership, and food availability [22, 24, 21].

Taking cue from the existing evidence on adverse impact of DDC on diabetic patients and limited attention to socio-economic position in DDC research, in this work, we attempt to assess the relationship between lifestyle, demographic, SEP factors and DDC

# Chapter 4

## Methodology

### 4.1 Study Design

The work is a cross-sectional data analysis to explore the association between lifestyle, socio- economic factors and diabetes-depression co-morbidity.

### 4.2 Data Source

The study is based on pooled survey data obtained from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) [25], CDC, USA. BRFSS is an equal representation and cross sectional survey conducted annually by the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) , a main component of the United States Department of Health.

The dataset is based on telephonic interviews, over landlines and cellular phones. It is collection of data regarding risk behavior prevalence and preventive health practices that determine the health status [25]. Survey data for four years from 2012 to 2015 were used as these were the years for which the variables, required for the study were available.

### 4.3 Data Cleaning

Cases with valid values for all values were included, rest were removed and filtering for valid values for each variable was done. The Fig 4.1 describes the process of data cleaning and preparation in detail. Respondents aged above 30 years were selected because diabetes prevalence is mostly classified as type 2 Diabetes among them [26]. BMI range was selected as [17.49, 46.06] as beyond this range almost negligible data points remained.

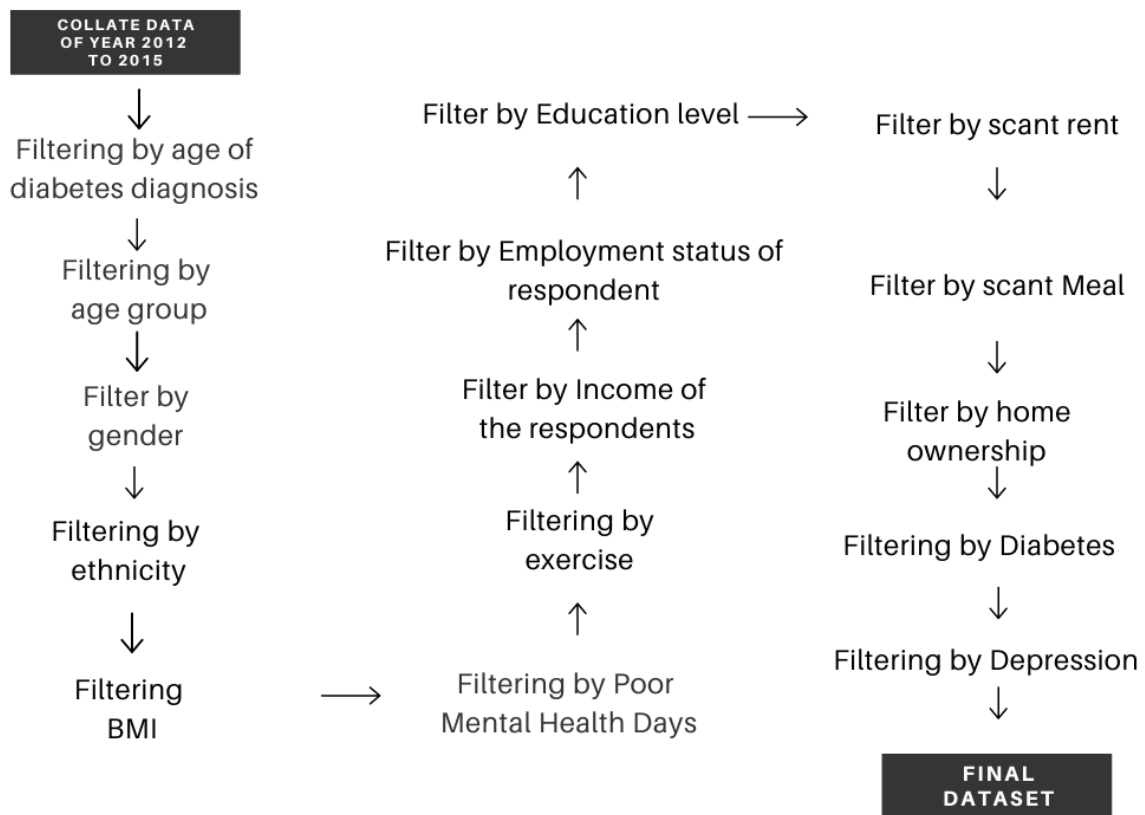


Figure 4.1: The figure explains the process of filtering employed to clean the datasets.

## 4.4 Study Parameters

### 4.4.1 Independent variable

The demographic measures (Age, Gender, ethnicity), the lifestyle measures (BMI, mental health not good, exercise) and Socio-economic position (SEP) measure are chosen as independent variables based on their association with DDC [9, 6, 22, 24]. SEP is included, as it is related to the overall health of a person [22, 27, 28, 24, 29]. It is computed from the variables in the BRFSS code-book as shown in equation (4.1). Variables relating to income [28], education [22], home ownership [30], food affordability [20] and home-rent paying ability [24] were used based on evidence of their relationship with socio-economic background of a person. Our intention was to have an indicator which could be used to categorise the respondents into the lower, middle, and upper socio-economic position categories as explained by Fig 4.2 and Table 4.1. In this a study a higher value of SEP reflects a better socio-economic position. The detailed creation of SEP can be found in the appendix.

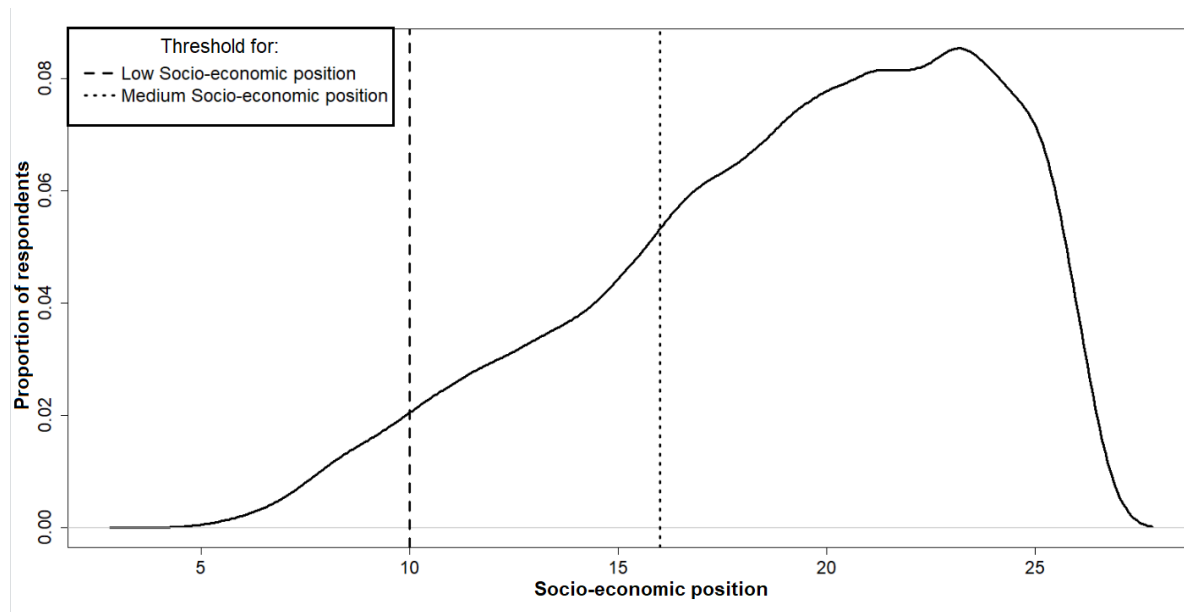


Figure 4.2: The figure represents socio-economic position of respondents in the dataset

$$SEP = INCOME + \frac{1}{HOME \ OWNERSHIP} + EDUCATION \ LEVEL + SCANT \ MEAL + SCANT \ RENT + \frac{1}{EMPLOYMENT} \quad (4.1)$$

#### 4.4.2 Dependent variables

The variables: Diabetes: (Ever told) you have diabetes, and Depression: (*Ever told*) you have a depressive disorder, including depression, major depression, dysthymia, or minor depression were used to create the DDC variable. DDC was assigned '1' if the respondent had both diabetes and depression and a '0' if the respondent had diabetes but not depressed. Equation (4.2) summarizes this concept.

$$Comorbidity = \{0, \text{No Depression and Diabetic}; 1, \text{Depression and Diabetic}\} \quad (4.2)$$

### 4.5 Data Analysis

The outcome variable of DDC is binary (equation 4.2) hence, binomial logistics regression is employed to explore association between the independent measure of SEP, lifestyle and demographic factors to dependent DDC measure. After obtaining the coefficients, odds ratios were computed.

To assess the association of SEP with the outcome variable two models were created: 1) Model I and Model II. Model I takes into account Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Exercise, BMI, socio-economic position and poor mental health as input. Model I is graphically explained by Fig 4.3.

Model II also takes Age, Gender, Ethnicity, Exercise, BMI, SEP and poor mental health as input. But unlike Model I, the SEP is divided into three categories: low, medium and high. The second model is developed to investigate how the three SEP categories may be associated with DDC. The division was made after seeing the distribution of SEP



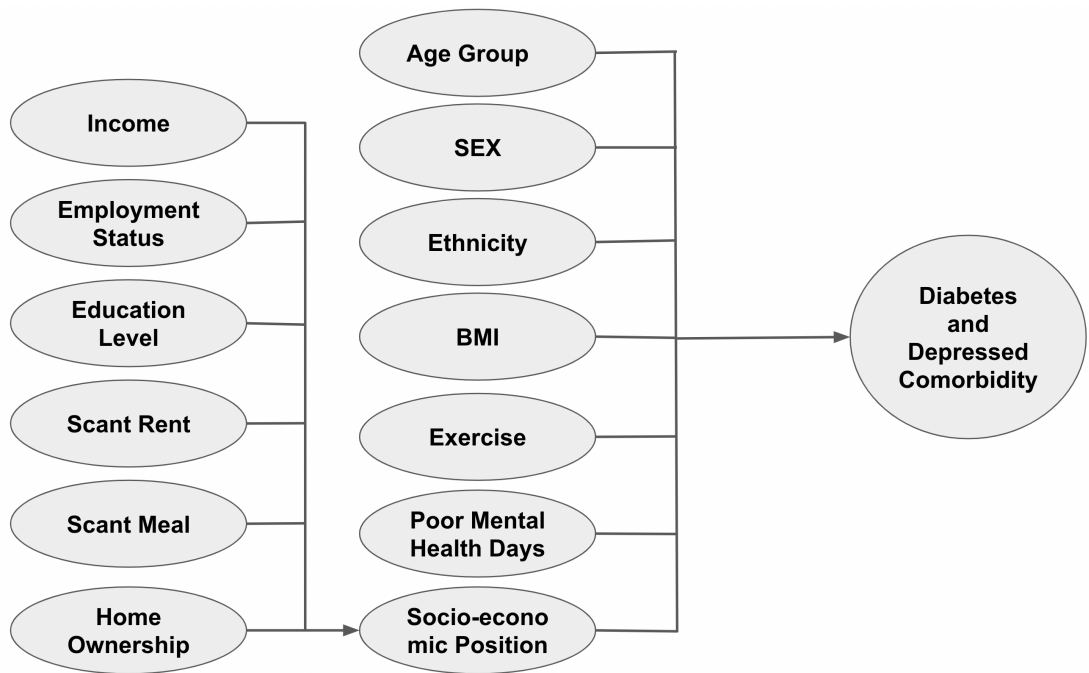


Figure 4.3: The figure represents Model I with independent variables and dependent diabetes depression comorbidity

Category	Value of SEP
Low	Less than 10
Medium	10 to less than 16
High	16 or above

Table 4.1: Table explains the categorization of SEP into three categories: Low, Medium and High

in the dataset and median values represented by Fig.4.2, further mentioned in the Table 4.1. Model II is graphically described in Fig. 4.4

The analysis was done on R studio version 4.0.3.

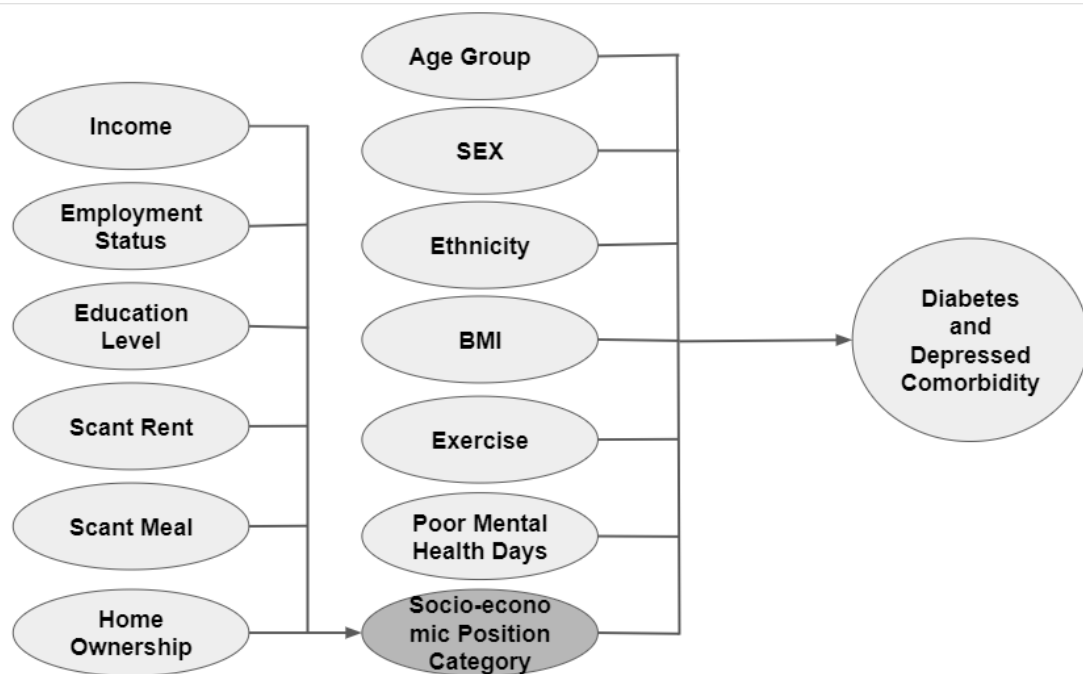


Figure 4.4: The figure represents Model II with independent variables and dependent diabetes depression comorbidity

# Chapter 5

## Results and Discussion

### 5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Total records collected were,  $N=1,873,580$ . After cleaning, removing, missing values 15,649 remained. Table 5.1 provides the descriptive summary of variables in the dataset. In the datasets 25.95% ( $N=4047$ ) were found to have Diabetes-depression co-morbidity (DDC). 19.81% ( $N=1426$ ) Males and 31.20% ( $N=2621$ ) female had DDC. Note that DDC prevalence was higher among women than in men (different in proportion: 11.39% , 95% CI (0.88-0.90),  $p<0.001$ ). The mean age of the respondents was 62.70 [95% CI (62.54-62.87)] years indicating that most respondents were relatively elderly. Mean BMI was 31.03 [95% CI (30.94-31.12)] and median was 30.34 [95% CI (30.34-30.42)] indicating obese respondents on average in the sample. Among those who perform exercise only 22.67% had DDC, while 31.48% among those who reported no exercise [difference in proportion: 8.81%, 95 % CI(0.90-0.93),  $p<0.001$ ]. This indicates that, sedentary respondents have a higher prevalence of DDC. Also, the mean SEP was 19.11 [95% CI(19.03 to 19.18)]. Also, variation of DDC across different ethnicity was observed: White (27.62%,  $N=2967$ ), Black (20.38%,  $N=638$ ), Hispanic (27.36%,  $N=200$ ), Other race (21.66%,  $N=146$ ) and multiracial (29.90%,  $N=96$ ).

### 5.2 Result and Discussion

SEP, Age, BMI, Poor mental health, gender, exercise, ethnicity except multiracial were found to be statistically significant with DDC. The prevalence of DDC tends to decrease with increase in age. For every 5 year increase in age, the odds of DDC decrease by

Variable	Mean	95% CI	
Age	62.700	62.530 to 62.870	
BMI	31.025	30.937 to 31.114	
Poor Mental health days	4.290	4.151 to 4.429	
SEP	19.107	19.034 to 19.180	
Diabetes-depression Comorbidity	Total 15597	N 4047	% 25.95%
Male	7196	1426	19.81%
Female	8401	2621	31.20%
White	10741	2967	27.62%
Black	3130	638	20.38%
Hispanic	731	200	27.36%
Other race	674	146	21.66%
Multiracial	321	96	29.90%
Exercise	9800	2222	22.67%
No Exercise	5797	1825	31.48%

Table 5.1: Descriptive summary of the variable in the diabetes-depression comorbidity study.

12.1%[OR 0.86, 95% CI (0.86 to 0.90),  $p < 0.001$ ]. Perhaps with gradual increase in age diabetic patients learn to manage their health condition [31] . Women were found to have 45.6% [OR 1.62, 95% CI(1.42 to 1.68),  $p < 0.001$ ] higher DDC odds as compared to men. It appears that diabetic women are at a higher risk of poor mental health than diabetic men, which could be attributed to higher level of depressive behavior in women in general [32].

Ethnic groups of Black [OR 0.42, 95% CI (0.37 to 0.47),  $p < 0.001$ ], Hispanic [OR 0.63, 95% CI (0.51 to 0.76),  $p < 0.001$ ] and other race [OR 0.54, 95% CI (0.43 to 0.67),  $p < 0.001$ ] and multiracial [OR 0.72, 95% CI (0.54 to 0.95)] are found to be have lower likelihood of DDC. Studies on depression indicate a higher level of prevalence among these ethnic groups [33, 34], but low adherence to treatment and under reporting depressive behaviour due to socio-cultural factors [35]. This could explain lower odds of DDC among

Variable	Odd ratio	95% CI	p-value
Age	0.879	0.862 to 0.897	< 0.001
Gender <sup>1</sup>			
Female	1.544	1.417 to 1.684	<0.001
Ethnicity <sup>2</sup>			
Black	0.420	0.374 to 0.471	<0.001
Hispanic	0.626	0.513 to 0.760	<0.001
Other race	0.538	0.430 to 0.669	<0.001
Multiracial	0.717	0.536 to 0.951	<0.05
BMI	1.017	1.010 to 1.025	<0.001
Exercise	0.889	0.816 to 0.969	<0.05
Poor Mental health	1.096	1.090 to 1.101	<0.001
SEP	0.919	0.911 to 0.928	<0.001

1 Male is used as reference category

2 White is used as reference category

Table 5.2: Results of Logistic regression for Model I

the Black and Hispanic ethnic groups in the dataset. Presence of exercise was found to be associated with reduced odds of DDC by 11.1% (OR 0.89, 95% CI (0.82 to 0.97),  $p < 0.001$ ). For a unit increase in BMI 1.02% [OR 1.02, 95% CI (1.01 to 1.03),  $p < 0.001$ ] higher odds of DDC was found, but this is marginally significant for the given dataset. This could be indicating a more homogeneous distribution of BMI in the sample. For a unit increase in poor mental health days the DDC odds were found to increase by nearly 9.6% [OR 1.10, 95% CI (1.09 to 1.10),  $p < 0.001$ ].

For every unit increase in SEP the odds of DDC decrease by factor of 8.1% [OR 0.92, 95% CI (0.91 to 0.93),  $p < 0.001$ ], indicating a gradient association between the two. On categorising into high, medium and low, it was found that respondents in high SEP and medium SEP categories have 62.1% [OR 0.38, 95% CI (0.31 to 0.46),  $p < 0.001$ ] and 24.7% [OR 0.75, 95% CI (0.61 to 0.92),  $p < 0.05$ ] reduced odds of DDC respectively as compared to those belonging to low SEP. This indicates that even within a particular SEP category, those having lower SEP have higher odds of DDC as compared to those with higher SEP value.

Variable	Odd ratio	95% CI	p-value
Age	0.888	0.870 to 0.906	<0.001
Gender <sup>1</sup>			
Female	1.617	1.485 to 1.762	<0.001
Ethnicity <sup>2</sup>			
Black	0.436	0.388 to 0.489	<0.001
Hispanic	0.662	0.543 to 0.804	<0.001
Other race	0.544	0.435 to 0.675	<0.001
Multiracial	0.733	0.547 to 0.973	<0.05
BMI	0.018	1.010 to 1.025	<0.001
Exercise	0.856	0.786 to 0.933	<0.001
Poor Mental health	1.099	1.094 to 1.104	<0.001
SEP <sup>3</sup>			
Medium SEP	0.753	0.613 to 0.924	<0.05
High SEP	0.379	0.311 to 0.462	<0.001

1 Male is used as reference category

2 White is used as reference category

3 Low SEP is used as reference category

Table 5.3: Results of Logistic regression for Model II

# Chapter 6

## Conclusion and Future Work

To our knowledge, this is the first study which explores the association between of socio-economic factors and diabetes-depression comorbidity, adjusting for lifestyle and demographic factors. Higher socio-economic status was found to be associated with lower odds of diabetes-depression co-morbidity. Women, sedentary respondents, those who reported no exercise, reported poor mental health and had higher BMI were found to have higher odds of Diabetes-depression comorbidity. The findings reinforce the investigation related to socio-economic position of the patients with diabetes-depression comorbidity. Secondly, they point out the need to introduce programs and interventions which consider the socio-economic inequality among diabetic patients. Causal link could not be established between socio-economic position and DDC because the study is cross-sectional data analysis. Longitudinal studies could be more useful in this regard.

## Appendix

### Creation of Soci-economic position variable

The socio-economic position (SEP) of the respondents was created after careful consideration of the variable of BRFSS code book. Each individual variable was studied for its definition and measure of SEP was created as mentioned in (equation 4.1). The definition of all the variables can be found in table 6.1

Income of the person was quantitative variable, ranging from 1 to 8 with increasing income of respondents. Making higher income [28] values associated to higher SEP. Employment status of the respondents, ranging from 1 to 8, was associated to higher SEP. Thus, quantitative variable of employment status which is showing decreased progression with increase in value, is negatively associated with higher SEP. Individual's highest level of education serves as a determinant factor for socioeconomic conditions [22, 27]. As higher education provides better access to employment and in turn to the earn better. Education level being quantitative variable with range of 1 to 6, is positively co-related with higher SEP. Housing and accommodation status contribute significantly when it comes to gauge economic status of a household [24]. Thus, variable of home ownership with value of '1' if the respondent owns and '2' if the respondent rents his/her house, is negatively correlated to higher SEP. Also, respondents' ability to pay the rent and affordability of food are partial indicator of SEP [29]. Making quantitative variable of scant meal and scant meal, ranging from 1 to 5 based on decreasing affordability, positively co-related with higher SEP.

Finally, the measure of SEP was created from the past evidence from literature. In the given study, Income, education level, scant meal, scant rent were positively co-related with higher SEP, thus are taken as numerators. And home ownership, employment were negatively co-related with higher SEP, thus are taken as denominators. It is mathematically depicted by equation 4.1.



Category	Variable	Value
Demography	Age group	3=(30,34), 4=(35,39),5=(40,44),6=(45,49), 7=(50,54),8=(55,59), 9=(60,64), 10=(65,69), 11=(70,74), 12=(75,79), 13=80+
	Gender	1=Male, 2=Female
	Ethnicity	1=White, 2=Black, 3=Hispanic, 4=Other race, 5=Multiracial
Lifestyle	BMI	17.49 to 46.06
	Exercise	1=yes, 0=No
Social and economic status	Education Level	1=No school, 2=grade 1 to 8, 3=grade 9 to 11 4=grade 12, 5=College 1 to 3 years 6=College 4 years or more
	Employment Status	1=Employed for wages, 2=self-employed, 3=Homemaker, 4=Student, 5=Out of work for < 1 year, 6=Out of work for > 1 year, 7=Retired, 8=Unable to work
	Income	1=(<10,000), 2=(10,000 to 14,999), 3=(15,000 to 19,999), 4=(20,000 to 24,999) 5=(25,000 to 34,999), 6=(35,000 to 49,999) 7=(50,000 to 79,999), 8=(>75,000)
	Scant Rent	1=always, 2=Usually, 3=Sometimes, 4=Rarely, 5=Never
	Scant Meal	1=always, 2=Usually, 3=Sometimes, 4=Rarely, 5=Never
Comorbidity	Home ownership	1=Own, 2=Rent
	Diabetes	1=yes, 3=no
	Depression	1=yes, 2=no

Table 6.1: Table representing definition of all the variables used in the study

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