



Blood Glucose Control and Daily Diabetes Management Are Important for Patients

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If health care providers (HCPs) are aware of patients' attitudes and needs, they can better assist patients in developing appropriate self-care plans. Connie Chitwood-Vu, RN, MS, and Lyndsay Wright, RN, MA, both from Insulet Corporation, Bedford, Massachusetts, USA, presented the results of an independent survey about what patients with diabetes or their caregivers learned or wanted to learn from their HCPs about diabetes.

The online survey of >4600 patients with diabetes or their caregivers was conducted in March 2014 by an independent market research company and funded by Insulet. No incentives were offered. Of the 314 responders, 53% had type 1 diabetes and 57% were women. The average age was 40 years, and the average duration of diabetes was 18 years. Patients communicated most with their endocrinologist or certified diabetes educator (CDE), at a rate of about 5 times per year.

The survey obtained information on the most important lessons learned by patients or caregivers from HCPs pertaining to diabetes at the times of diagnosis, changes in therapy, disease progression, and diabetes complications. HCPs included CDEs, nurses, endocrinologists, and other providers. Respondents were also asked what topics they were hesitant about or resistant to share with HCPs and what they wanted to learn more about.

Overall, the most important lessons learned by patients and caregivers concerned living with diabetes on a day-to-day basis and blood glucose control. At diagnosis, the following topics were most important to patients: diabetes management (eg, how a normal life with diabetes can be achieved), caring for a child with diabetes (eg, "child first, diabetes second"), how to live with diabetes, and how to control blood glucose. When changing therapy, patients and caregivers needed information about insulin pump options and adjustments. During times of complications, patients and caregivers learned lessons including living with diabetes as a chronic disease and the types of patient support systems available.

With regard to diabetes self-management, lessons learned included how to take ownership of the disease, monitor blood glucose and HbA_{1c} levels, and be aware of insulin dosing and adjustments (eg, when to adjust basal rates). Eighty percent of respondents felt that their providers had the knowledge to answer their questions. For those who wanted their providers to give more

information, the most common topics about which they wished their HCPs had more information to answer their questions are shown in Table 1.

The sources of information for patients to learn about diabetes and their preferred ways to learn about diabetes are shown in Table 2.

HCPs have an obligation to explain all possible therapies and technologies to patients, provide support systems, and encourage patients to take ownership of their disease, stated Wright. Patients have the responsibility of checking blood glucose frequently, exercising, eating properly, understanding available interventions, and taking advantage of support systems. Understanding what is most important to patients with diabetes and to their caregivers is critical for HCPs to help patients control their blood glucose and manage their disease on a daily basis.

Table 1. Topics for Which Patients Wished Their Health Care Providers and Certified Diabetes Educator Had More Information

Topic	%
Controlling blood sugar	21
Living with diabetes	19
Dietary requirements	11
Pediatric care	10
Advances in diabetes care	8
Insulin pumps	6
Financial issues	5

Table 2. Sources for Patients to Learn About Diabetes (in Percentages)

	Selected	Preferred
Individual meetings with health care providers	67	38
Print materials	62	22
Diabetes-specific websites	52	15
Clinical research data	37	9
Social media	27	5
Diabetes classes, workshops, and seminars	36	7
Other	7	4