

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE OF RECEIVING TELEPHONE-BASED DIABETES HEALTH COACHING: AN INTERPRETIVE DESCRIPTION

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Background:

Over the last decade, there has been a surge in the literature regarding diabetes health coaching. Diabetes health coaching is a patient-centered intervention focused on empowering patients to become actively engaged in their own diabetes self-management and has been shown to improve glycemic control among adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM). However, little is known about the patient experience in having support from a diabetes health coach.

Aim:

The primary aim of this research was to explore the experience of receiving diabetes health coaching in community-based adults with T2DM in the Canadian context.

Methods:

Using a qualitative, interpretive description study approach, participants who received diabetes health coaching as part of a community-based randomized controlled trial were asked to participate a one-time telephone-based interview.

Results :

A total of 12 participants were interviewed [66.7% females and 33.3% males; mean age = 62 years (Standard Deviation= 6.91)] and 50% reported being on insulin. After iterative content analysis, four themes emerged. *Adapting to life with diabetes* reflected that diabetes health coaching assisted by addressing misconceptions, providing increased knowledge and awareness, and medication adherence. *Heightened mindfulness of diabetes-related wellness* captured the increased the attention participants' gave to their health and self-management behaviours. The *coach met me where I was* theme highlighted the differences in participants' readiness to make self-management behaviour changes and overall, utilization of the coach. Finally, *a genuine supportive connection* illustrates the unique coach-patient relationship that is described as consistent, engaging, non-judgmental and a positive reinforcement.

Conclusion:

Generally, participants of the study found diabetes health coaching to be a helpful and meaningful self-management support strategy. However, it is important to consider the findings of this study may be limited to only adults living with T2DM in a Canadian context. Finally, the perceived experience of diabetes health coaching amongst participants remains multifaceted and complex, reflecting one's own unique contextual lived experience with T2DM.