

UNCOVERING THE PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT OF DIABETES. USING TAILORED VISUAL DIALOGUE TOOLS IN CONSULTATIONS WITH PEOPLE WITH ADULT-ONSET TYPE 1 DIABETES

Thorsøe, T ¹; Pals, R. PhD in Public Health ¹; Forbes, A ²;
Due-Christensen, M ¹;

¹ *Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen, Herlev, Denmark*

² *King's College London, London, United Kingdom*

Background

Psychosocial challenges related to adult-onset type 1 diabetes (T1D) are not systematically addressed in diabetes consultations. Addressing psychosocial aspects of T1D at onset may improve well-being and prevent development of severe diabetes distress. Using dialogue tools systematically may help health professionals to identify and support psychosocial needs.

Aim

This study aimed to explore health professionals' experience of using tailored visual dialogue tools to facilitate conversations about the psychosocial impact of diabetes in consultations with adults recently diagnosed with T1D.

Methods

Two visual dialogue tools tailored to the psychosocial needs of people with adult-onset T1D, developed in a previous co-design study, were used in consultations in five diabetes specialist clinics in Denmark (n=3) and the United Kingdom (n=2). The tools were used in two face-to-face consultations held within the first year of diagnosis. Sixteen health professionals (diabetes specialist nurses (n=13), consultant (1), dieticians (n=2)) were interviewed about their experience of using the tools and the impact they had on consultations. Transcribed interviews were analysed thematically.

Results

The health professionals found that the visual dialogue tools: 1) supported dialogue about person-specific psychosocial challenges that were not usually brought up in consultations, 2) facilitated understanding and acknowledgement of the interdependence between bio-psycho-social aspects of diabetes, and 3) helped normalize feelings and reactions related to living with T1D. Uncovering psychosocial challenges highlighted person-specific support needs and increased the health professional's understanding of the impact of diabetes on the person's life, enabling tailored self-management and emotional support. The health professionals emphasised the importance of training in facilitating conversations with the tools and supervision to share experiences and learn from each other. Back up from management e.g. prioritising psychosocial conversations and allocating time for training were essential for implementation.

Conclusion

Dialogue tools in consultations between people with adult-onset T1D and

health professionals enable supportive communication about psychosocial issues related to a new life with T1D. Training in person-specific communication techniques, supervision and management support are essential for implementation.