Recognising and managing adult-onset type 1 diabetes: Lessons from the Living with and adapting to diabetes programme (LADDER) study

Objectives:
Psychosocial challenges following adult-onset type 1 diabetes are common but are not systematically addressed in clinical practice. This study explored the experiences of participants in an intervention co- designed with people with adult-onset type 1 diabetes and health care professionals tailored to facilitate conversations about the psychosocial impact of diabetes following diagnosis.

Methods:
The intervention integrated visual dialogue tools in two face-to-face consultations, the first held one to five months following the diagnosis in two diabetes specialist clinics in Denmark. Health professionals (8 diabetes specialist nurses and 2 dietitians) were trained in using the dialogue tools prior to delivering the intervention. Participants were interviewed after participating in one or two LADDER consultations to explore their experiences and potential benefits of the intervention. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed thematically through a realist evaluation lens.

Results:
In total 135 people with adult-onset type 1 diabetes participated in LADDER, 57 % were male, mean age at diagnosis was 33 years (±12.7). Of these, 27 were interviewed. The participants reported that the intervention: 1) presented a framework that validated conversations about psychosocial aspects of diabetes, 2) helped to signpost and verbalise thoughts and experiences in relation to diabetes, and 3) clarified and addressed their needs for support. The participants' experiences of the intervention were shaped by their relationship with the health professional, the approach of the health professional as well as the timing of the consultations.

Conclusion
Using visual dialogue tools in consultations with adults with new-onset type 1 diabetes can support dialogue about psychosocial issues related to a new life with type 1 diabetes and may improve quality of life and reduce diabetes distress long term.

Bibliography

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Mette is a diabetes specialist nurse and has a PhD in nursing from the Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Palliative Care at King's College London, UK which she completed in 2017. Her research interests are focused on psychosocial aspects of living with diabetes. She has a special interest in adaptation to life with diabetes in adults who have recently been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Most of her research has involved working with people with diabetes and health care professionals to develop and test interventions that offer psychosocial support to adults with diabetes, often through peer-support. An example of this are interventions that aim to prevent and reduce diabetes distress in adults with diabetes. She is currently working as a research fellow at Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen in Denmark.