



RSPP: Development of an Adolescent Diabetes Support Group

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INTRODUCTION

- Williams et al. study of 187 T1D and parents showed close links between poor glycemic control, family conflict, and parental psychological distress.
- Effects are interactive.
- Poor family functioning leads to poor adolescent self-management, leading to more family conflict and stress.
- My preceptor, Dr. Satkauskas, was approached by a parent of a T1D, who had recently been hospitalized with DKA, and inquired about available support groups.

METHODS

- We decided to develop a support group for adolescent diabetics and their parents in our area.
- I wrote an invitation letter, explaining our goals and plan for our introductory meeting.
- I then mailed this letter to all of the adolescent diabetic patients within my preceptor and his group's practice.

- I also mailed and emailed the letter to the school nurses at Galva, Kewanee, Stark County, and Kewanee school districts, to share with students.
- At our initial meeting, I informally lead a discussion about goals for the support group and took notes to outline concerns, reasons for attending, and interests for future sessions.

RESULTS

- Our initial meeting had 8 total in attendance.
- 3 diabetic adolescents and 5 parents.
- Both adolescents and parents voiced a sense of isolation and stated other people do not understand the challenges of being a T1D adolescent or being a parent to one.
- The adolescents stated their interest in attending was to make connections with other adolescent T1D. They hope this will develop friendships with people who understand what they are going through.



- The parents stated they hoped to have a forum in which they could talk to each other and make connections with other parents of diabetic children.
- Carbohydrate counting and the appropriateness of certain foods for a diabetic is always a concern.
- There was a consensus that getting some young adults who are well-controlled type-1 diabetics and leading successful lives to come speak to the group would be beneficial.

CONCLUSIONS

- Both parents and adolescents voiced a sense of isolation.
- Attendees were interested in making connections with similar people and having the ability to speak with and learn from each other.
- Understanding food and nutrition is a constant concern.
- Attendees also uniformly praised school nurses as being very helpful, understanding, and caring.

CONCLUSIONS

Goals and future plans for the group include:

- Have regular, monthly meetings.
- Presentation about food and nutrition.
- Have role model session with older, well-controlled type-1 diabetics.
- Presentation about advancements in treatment and technology.
- For our next session, we are planning to have a presentation by insulin pump representatives.
- Perhaps health-care providers could monitor for changes in HgA1C in those who regularly attend.

REFERENCES

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