Role of Psychoeducation on Self-Management of Type 1 Diabetes in Adolescents - A Review

Sanjana Malhotra¹*, Sherin P. Antony²

ABSTRACT
The efficacy of Psychoeducation for adolescents with type 1 diabetes mellitus has long been debated among mental health professionals. Psychoeducation is an effective intervention which aids in managing the mental health concerns of the adolescents along with the parameters of their illness such as insulin regimen, dietary and exercise discipline and need for autonomy as adolescence is a developmentally challenging period. The current paper reviews twofold objectives: first is to comprehend the relationship between psychosocial factors, Psychoeducation and type 1 diabetes. Second is to uncover the implications of Psychoeducation in health care practice. A review of 40 studies from 1991 to 2014 was carried out to understand the role of Psychoeducation in type 1 diabetes. The studies reviewed indicates a positive association between Psychoeducation, quality of life, reduction in disturbed eating pattern and management of their health condition.

Keywords: Type 1 Diabetes, Psychoeducation

Type 1 diabetes mellitus is a chronic medical condition that occurs when pancreas produces little or no insulin, requiring diligent blood sugar monitoring, lifestyle modifications, treatment and prevention of complications related to the disorder through introduction of Psychoeducation. Childhood is the usual age of onset but an individual can develop it at any age. The only treatment available at present is insulin which has to be injected in the body through injections, pump or pen.

Management of diabetes is a difficulty for adolescents since they are entangles in issues of exerting independence, developing self-concept, onset of puberty as puberty can be the causal factor for resistance of insulin (Anderson, Ho, Bracket, Finkelstein & Laffel, 1997). As diabetic

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adolescents require consistent monitoring, it increases the intensity of intrusiveness of the caregiver (Weinger, O’Donnel & Ritholz, 2001). Adolescents may see their parents as limitations on food as efforts to control them and may regard the need to monitor diet and be conscientious about injections as rules and regulations imposed from outside which can lead to family conflict (Wysocki, 1993). Moreover, within the adolescent peer culture, those who are different are often stigmatized. Thus, the adolescent having diabetes may neglect appropriate care to avoid rejection. Emotionally stable and assiduous adolescents are more likely to follow the complex regimen requires by the demanding health condition compared to those who do not have these qualities (Skinner, Hampson & Fife-Shaw, 2002).

Children and adolescents are most of the time in school, involves in extra curricular activities or with friends wherein the monitoring of adults or peers is not always a constant process and neither do they prefer it due to the need to become independent which is a major characteristic of adolescence. Thus, they need to take the route of self-management by becoming aware of the myths and facts allied with diabetes and learn how to manage their condition on a routine basis, how to handle emergency situations and how to lead an active life by keeping prospective complications at bay. Psychoeducation is an effective way through which knowledge and independence derived from knowledge can be wielded along with fulfilling the responsibility of self-management.

Psychoeducation is an effective integration of educational and psychotherapeutic interventions. It provides psychological support along with providing requires medical information. The strength of the Psychoeducation lies in the ability to focus on the present and on the drive of the receiver. Thus, Psychoeducation induces confidence of control of the disease and how it can be sustained with continuous management (Snoek et al., 1999). The aim of review is to explore the role of Psychoeducation in adherence of regimen, impact of psychosocial factors, optimal management of blood glucose level, mental health issues such as anxiety and depression and coping with the disorder.

**OUTCOME OF PSYCHOEDUCATION IN DIABETES**

Literatures concerning the current topic were reviewed for the current paper. 15% of the studies on Psychoeducation that have yielded remarkably significant value have been listed in the table below. The research design of these studies are randomly controlled design and assessments were done after 3, 6, 12, 18 months interval: altering for all six mentioned studies. For these six studies, Psychoeducation program included educational awareness along with psychotherapy namely Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Rational Emotive Therapy, problem solving and educational manager included internet programs designed for executive purpose. In all the research studies, Psychoeducation is based on the crux of making adolescents independent to manage their health condition. Also, therapeutic interventions included in psychotherapy have yielded positive results.
In majority of the research studies retrieved, the focus is centred around cognitions, thoughts and problem solving but emphasis on emotional regulation is not laid. Into the bargain, the variables cyclically researched and assessed embrace coping, quality of life, diabetes distress, clinical correlates of diabetes, self-efficacy, family conflict, and regimen adherence. Thus, the variables researched reveal that cognition precedes emotions. Through reflection, the variables that can be hoisted to endow the adolescent with self-management skills can include peer acceptance/rejection/respect/adjustment; emotional support received from sibling/family/friends, motivation, emotional regulation, institutional responsibility corporal characteristics such as obesity, medical complications and choice of careers.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Year of Publishing</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BM Sworen et al.,</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Annual rate of severe hypoglycaemia requiring parental therapy in the group receiving psychoeducation p=0.01</td>
<td>Hypoglycaemia</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Annual hospital admission rate was lower in the control group p=0.04</td>
<td>Hospital admission</td>
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<td>Annual rate of emergency department visits in the control group was lower p=0.004</td>
<td>Emergency department visits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grey Margaret et al.,</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Lower HbA1c p=0.04 Higher Qol (P=0.02) Social Acceptance (P=0.01) Self- efficacy (P= 0.03) Lower perceived stress (P=0.02) Diabetes family conflict (P=0.02)</td>
<td>HbA1c</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Quality of Life Coping Social-competence Self-management Family conflict</td>
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## STUDY CHARACTERISTICS

### A. Psychological morbidities in diabetic adolescents

Depression and anxiety disorders are most common diagnoses among people with diabetes and these conditions occur more often in patients than in the general population (Hood et al., 2006). Psychological feature such as diabetes and anxiety can complicate the management of diabetes. In a primary care population, major depression in diabetics was mainly associated with behaviours that had been initiated by the patient such as exercise, managing medication, diet but have now become difficult to maintain (Lin et al., 2004). Prevalence of depression in diabetic population is higher as compared to non-diabetic population. This has been demonstrated by

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<tr>
<td>Mulvaney A. Shelgauh et al.,</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Self-management (P=0.02) Improvement in problem solving (P=0.23) Consistency A1C(P=0.27)</td>
<td>Self-management Problem-solving HbA1c</td>
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<td>EC Morelnad and associates</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Daily BGM frequency (p=0.02) Family involvement for diabetes management (p&lt;0.001)</td>
<td>Glycemic control Family involvement Adherence to BGM</td>
</tr>
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<td>Snoek J.Frank and associates</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Average drop in worst control of HbA1c= &gt;0.5% Improved positive well-being P &lt;0.5% Decreased diabetes distress P &lt;0.5</td>
<td>HbA1c Well-being Diabetes distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Margaret et al.,</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>QOL impact p=0.02</td>
<td>Quality of life Metabolic control Coping Self-efficacy Family functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoysa et al.,</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Hypoglycemia awareness improved (P&lt;0.001)</td>
<td>Hypoglyaemia</td>
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Goldney and his associates in a study conducted in 2004, that prevalence in diabetic population was 24% comparative with non-diabetic population of 17%. In another review article by Anderson and his associates (2001) and Malhotra & Reddy (2013), the prevalence of depression is present in clinical samples to a greater degree as compared with non-clinical samples.

Clinically diagnosable eating disorders also appear to be more prevalent among people with diabetes than in general population; this association is especially strong in young women and it increases the risk of developing diabetes complications. Depression, anxiety and eating disorders can all be treated effectively but they tend to recur and may require repeated treatment. Eating disorder is correlated to irregular glycemic control, retinopathy and divergence between parent and child on the issue of food can hinder diabetes management (Lustman & Harris, 1998).

Quality of life increases with administration of skills program (Grey, Boland, Davidson, Li & Tamborlane, 2000). Grey and her colleagues reported that adolescents who practiced intensive diabetes management and received coping skill training had lower A1c levels, had more confidence in their ability to manage their diabetes and reported less impact of diabetes on their quality of life than adolescents who practiced intensive management but did not receive coping skill training.

In a study conducted by Grey et al., 2013, with 320 youth aged between 11-14 years, Psychoeducation was delivered in the form of two internet programs and after time span of 18 months, youth who had completed both the programs reported higher quality of life, lower perceived stress, lower diabetes related family conflict, increased social acceptance and self-efficacy compared to those who had completed only one program. Quality of life is adversely impacted by diabetes (Brown et al., 2004; Lustman et al., 2000; Gavard JA et al., 1993; Ciechanowski PS et al., 2000).

B. Non adherence in diabetes care

Non adherence can be notices in the structure of somber psychological problems such as eating disorder, anxiety, depression which can be further treated by psychotherapy (Lustman & Harris, 1998; MG Pereira, Cross-Berg, P Almeida, JC Machado, 2008). Adherence to managing diabetes is independent of gender (Pattino AM, Sanchez J, Edison M, Delamater AM, 2005; Naar-King S et al., 2006). Enhancement in adherence is optimistically correlated with variables such as coping, self-efficacy, family functioning and psychosocial modification metabolic organization (Graue, Wentzel-Larsen, Bru, Hanested & Sovik, 2004; Grey, Lipman, Cameron & Thurber, 1997; Giva, Myers & Newman, 2000).

C. Blood glucose

The optimal management of blood glucose is related to diabetes explicit family disagreement. Disappointment of not achieving most favourable management can lead to conflict and the
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family’s concern only with the blood glucose level increases the patient’s anxiety (Williams, Laffell, Hood, 2009; Anderson et al, 2002; Hood, Butler, Anderson, Lafell, 2007; Lewin et al., 2006; Herge et al., 2012).

D. Coping with diabetes related distress
Grey and her colleagues reported that adolescents who practiced intensive diabetes management and received coping skills training had lower A1c levels, had more confidence in their ability to manage their diabetes and reported less impact of diabetes on their quality of life than adolescents who practiced intensive management but did not receive coping skill training. Wysocki and colleagues reported mixed results for families of adolescents who participated in a trial of behavioural family systems therapy (BFST). participants in this group had better parent-adolescent relationships but no improvement in adjustment to diabetes or glycemic control, compared with those receiving standard treatment.

In another controlled trail, Anderson and her colleagues provided separate group sessions for adolescents and their parents as a supplement to regular diabetes clinic visits. The goal of the sessions was to increase skill in using self-monitored blood glucose data for regimen adjustments. The goal of the parents session was to develop strategies for negotiating appropriate levels of parental involvement in the adolescents diabetes care. Eighteen months after completion of the 12 session group intervention, adolescents in the treatment group had significantly lower A1c levels and reported significant more use of SMBG data for selected regimen adjustments than adolescents in the control group. In some settings, coping skill training is incorporated into broader programmes of self-management education. In fact, the American Diabetes Association has stated that ”Diabetes specific coping skills training (CST) is designed to help patients overcome barriers to the successful application of new knowledge and skills. This intervention is designed to improve patient’s emotional well-being, diabetes self-care and long term blood glucose control. The CST approach used in this program is a psychoeducational group intervention that addresses attitudes and behaviours that underlie individual patterns of self-care”. Thus, this leads to positive outcome (Davidson, Boland & Grey, 1997).

In a group setting, individuals begin the process of identifying their own personal regimen barriers or ‘sticking points’. Patients are encouraged to identify sticking points as specifically as possible; the more expressly the sticking points are defined, the easier it is to resolve. Once a personal issue has been identified, patients help each other develop strategies for dealing with these issues, focusing on the approaches that have been successful in the past. A key goal of this process is to help patients recognize that certain thoughts or attitudes trigger distress and non-constructive behaviour, while erstwhile thoughts and outlook trigger a process that leads to better outcomes. In a study conducted by Whittemore R and his associates, diabetic adolescents having
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lower glycosylated haemoglobin and higher depressive symptoms are more likely to participate and benefit from the Psychoeducation program.

**IMPLICATIONS**

Though Psychoeducation is an effectual way to improve mental health by being educated about the disorder and receiving psychotherapy, there is a need to address other aspects associated with it rather than the cognitive component only; varied aspects include emotional adjustment, situational adjustments in the form of life events that can be overpowering, choice of professional careers. In addition, Psychoeducation can also be given to friends, peers, family, colleagues of the person affected with diabetes. Through this awareness among the public about health conditions will improve along with adjustment with the afflicted and for the afflicted. Hence, the requirement of a mental health expert for the purpose of managing chronic illness has developed.

**Acknowledgments**
The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

**Conflict of Interests**
The author declared no conflict of interests.

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How to cite this article: S Malhotra, S Antony (2016), Role of Psychoeducation on Self-Management of Type 1 Diabetes in Adolescents - A Review, International Journal of Indian Psychology, Volume 3, Issue 4, No. 56, ISSN 2348-5396 (e), ISSN: 2349-3429 (p), DIP: 18.01.019/20160304, ISBN: 978-1-365-23992-2