

Diabetes Literacy

Enhancing the (cost-) effectiveness of diabetes self-management education: A comparative assessment of different educational approaches and conditions for successful implementation

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The Diabetes Challenge

Approximately 32 million people in the EU live with diabetes. Each year >300,000 Europeans die from diabetes and related complications. Treatment is costly, and takes up between 5 and 15% of the total health expenditure of EU countries. As diabetes is strongly associated with overweight and obesity, the increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity worldwide, in conjunction with an ageing population, makes the prevalence of diabetes and the associated cost of treatment likely to increase. There is a need to strengthen the capacities of health systems in the EU to treat and care for diabetes patients. Diabetes requires extensive self-care. The capacities of patients to manage their own illness and care process are a key determinant of treatment outcomes. To enhance these capacities, education on self-management and lifestyle modification for people with diabetes is widely recommended. Self-management education programs vary from individual education to more cost-effective alternatives, such as group education, support groups and self-help programs. IT-based programs can expand the capacity and reach of health care systems. However several questions must be addressed before the large scale implementation of such education can be recommended as part of a comprehensive diabetes strategy.

Aim and objectives of the Diabetes Literacy project:

The Diabetes Literacy project aims to investigate a number of critical success factors of diabetes self-management to increase the effectiveness of health education as part of a comprehensive diabetes strategy at EU level. It will:

- Perform a systematic and comparative content analysis of the national diabetes strategies and frameworks across the EU Member States;
- Assess the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of individual and group education, IT based education, and self-help approaches to diabetes self-management education;
- Assess the implementation fidelity of current diabetes self-management programs;
- Consider the moderating role of health literacy in self-management for diabetic patients;
- Develop and test literacy-appropriate diabetes self-management education materials;
- Assess the conditions in health services for effectiveness of self-management programs.

The Diabetes Literacy project will produce the following results:

- A compendium of diabetes self-management programs in the 27 EU Member States;
- A systematic review of costing models for diabetes care across the EU and data on the costs of diabetes education on a per person basis at a national level;
- Evidence on the relative effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of individual, group, and IT based diabetes self-management education and of self-help programs;
- Evidence on the importance of the availability of multidisciplinary competent health professionals, efficient patient follow-up systems, and evaluation of services as conditions for effectiveness of diabetes self-management education programs;
- Evidence on the mediating role of implementation fidelity on the outcome of diabetes self-management education programs;
- A better understanding of the role of health literacy as a moderator of diabetes self-management education outcomes;
- Web-based diabetes self-management support materials and tools suitable for patients with lower levels of health literacy, as well as guidelines for provision of web-based support for those with lower levels of health literacy;
- Recommendations for the development of best practice models for diabetes self-management education as part of a comprehensive diabetes strategy at EU level.

Potential applications of the results:

The project recommendations will increase the effectiveness of diabetes self-management education in the EU Member States, and contribute to a comprehensive diabetes strategy at EU level. Its results will also be applicable to other chronic disease where self-management education is important including chronic heart conditions and joints diseases.

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