

Meetings

Diabetes UK Annual Professional Conference

Birmingham, UK, 29–31 March 2006

Caring for the forgotten older generation with diabetes

Research presented at the *Diabetes UK Annual Professional Conference* shows that many older people with diabetes are ending up in hospital unnecessarily. Research in nine care homes in East Staffordshire showed that 37 residents with diabetes spent 236 days a year in hospital – 93% of these days were emergency admissions. Around the UK, this equates to around 250 000 hospital days a year.

The study also showed how a pilot scheme introducing

a diabetes specialist nurse to provide structured education to care home residents and staff reduced emergency admissions by 75%. Hypoglycaemic episodes also decreased by 86% and over a third of residents achieved improved blood glucose levels.

Douglas Smallwood, Chief Executive at Diabetes UK, said: 'Local services need to ensure that such [innovative schemes are] adopted across the board to reduce inequalities.'

People with type 2 diabetes' beliefs about their medications

In a study exploring the relationship between beliefs about medication, personal models of care and adherence of people to their medication, it was found that, of 113 participants with type 2 diabetes, 90% believed that the

specific medicines prescribed for their diabetes were effective and necessary.

However, 60% were worried about the potential long-term effects of the medications, and 25% felt that some medications were over-prescribed by doctors.

Better understanding of HbA_{1c} can improve glycaemic control

Data presented at the conference indicate that patients' understanding of HbA_{1c} and its relevance to average blood glucose levels is poor.

Authors from Sherwood Forest

Hospitals NHS Trust collected questionnaire data from 120 outpatients. They concluded that better understanding of HbA_{1c} can enable better glycaemic control.

Diabetes education uptake between hospital and community nurses is similar

A study from Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership reported, at the *Diabetes UK Annual Professional Conference* earlier this year, that there was no significant difference between community and hospital nurses in rates of attendance at diabetes update courses.

With a 52% response rate from 200 questionnaires sent to nurses, the study authors also found that attendance rates at advanced courses were low. The responses also highlighted various gaps in professional knowledge, which suggest a need for continued effective and accessible educational support.

New website to help in the care of people with diabetes launched

The Strategic Alliance for Diabetes, a venture in which Diabetes UK works in partnership with a number of pharmaceutical organisations, launched a new website (<http://www.diabetesplanning.org> [accessed 26.05.2006]) at the *Diabetes UK Annual Professional Conference*.

The website aims to support diabetes leads by being a comprehensive resource of all the information they need to prioritise diabetes and deliver change at a local level by focusing on the commissioning process and the implementation of clinical care pathways.

Model of care promotes more patient involvement

A model of care which incorporates a 20-minute appointment in which the person with diabetes can gather information regarding his or her biomedical and personal information was presented at the conference. The information is shared by letter with the individual 1 to 2 weeks prior to the annual

review. Explanatory notes are included to help them interpret the results and to encourage them to raise any questions and concerns.

Evaluation of 35 questionnaires illustrated that the individuals in this model of care valued having their results before the consultation and felt more involved in their care.