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Assessing Patient-Provider Collaboration in Subjects with Type 2 Diabetes in Jamaica and Effects on Glycemic Control

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Keywords
Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, Patient-Centered Care, Physician-Patient Relations, Blood Glucose, Hemoglobin A, Glycosylated

Comments
Medical student Paul Daniel participated in this study as part of the Senior Scholars research program at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

**BACKGROUND**

- Type 2 diabetes mellitus is a growing health problem worldwide.
- Primary pathophysiology of this disease stems from impaired glucose uptake via insulin resistance that results in symptomology ranging from polydypsia and polyphagia to potentially life threatening hyperglycemic episodes.
- Major effects on health and healthcare costs are from microvascular complications.
- Primary pathophysiology of this disease stems from impaired glucose control, which can lead to end-stage renal disease, extremity amputation, and blindness, respectively.
- Timely screening and outpatient referrals, as well as good glycemic control, have been shown to slow the progression of complications.
- Recent trend in the United States for management of chronic conditions (such as type 2 diabetes) focuses on patient-centeredness which advocates for increased collaboration between caregivers such as nurses and physicians with patients to produce a management plan that is feasible for the patient.
- In Jamaica, the incidence of type 2 diabetes has been steadily increasing since 1960, with current estimates of a diabetic population exceeding 300,000. Some research suggests poor glycemic control in sampled populations and high rates of complications such as retinopathy.
- As a counter measure, organizations such as the Diabetes Association of Jamaica have implemented educational workshops to make the general population more aware of this disease and its complications.
- Beyond the education of the public and management by physicians, it would be interesting to assess the perception of patient-centeredness in Jamaicans suffering from type 2 diabetes and determine if there are any implications for management of their condition.

**PURPOSE**

To compare Patient Assessment of Care of Chronic Conditions (PACIC) scores to hemoglobin A1C values in subjects with type 2 diabetes and to determine the correlation between patient-physician collaboration and glycemic control.

METHODS

**STUDY DESIGN AND RECRUITMENT**

- A cross-sectional observational study measuring patient-to-provider collaboration in type 2 diabetes in a sample population in Jamaica.
- Patients recruited from the diabetes clinic at the University of the West Indies hospital in Mona, Jamaica on August 15, 2011 and August 22, 2011.
- 40 subjects were screened and 19 were ultimately enrolled after meeting the following inclusion criteria:
  - Males or females 18 years old and above diagnosed with type 2 diabetes as confirmed by laboratory testing by either one of the following: a fasting plasma glucose > 126 mg/dL (7 mmol/L) (no caloric intake for > 8 hours) with symptoms (polyuria, polyphagia, weight loss) or with random plasma glucose > 200 mg/dL (11.1 mmol/L), or a HbA1c ≥ 6.5%.
  - Ability to provide written informed consent.
  - Ability to complete PACIC questionnaire (subjects had to be able to read and comprehend English).
- Subjects were excluded based on the following criteria:
  - 1. Males and females without a documented history of type 2 diabetes (as described in inclusion criteria).
  - 3. Patients without hemoglobin A1c testing within 3 months of participation.

**RESULTS**

**STUDY POPULATION AND DATA**

- Study population was predominantly female (78.9%; 15 women/4 men), had an age range of 33-78 years (mean 55), years diagnosed with diabetes 0.03 – 32 years (mean 14), HbA1c values from 5.40% – 15.5% (mean 10.8%), and with a majority (42.1%; 8 participants) receiving a combination of insulin and an oral hypoglycemic agent as a treatment modality. (See Figure 1)

**VARIABLES**

- The Patient Assessment of Care of Chronic Conditions (PACIC) questionnaire was our measure of patient-to-physician collaboration. The PACIC is a validated instrument that was used to assess the level of collaboration patients with chronic disease feel they have with their healthcare providers.
- The PACIC measures five subjective categories: 1) Patient activation; 2) Delivery system design and decision support; 3) Goal setting; 4) Problem solving/contextual counseling; and 5) Follow-up/coordination.
- The overall PACIC score measures patient-to-physician collaboration with a range from a low of 1.0 to a high of 5.0.
- Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c%), which measures the amount of glycosylated hemoglobin (as a percentage) for the past 3 months, was our measure of glycemic control.
- Additional study data for both characterization of the study population and analysis of potential confounders were: age, sex, years diagnosed with diabetes, and current diabetic therapy (i.e., no therapy, lifestyle modification, insulin alone, or oral hypoglycemic agents or a combination of insulin/oral hypoglycemic agents).

**STUDY PROCEDURES**

- Subjects were consented, assigned a study number, and self-administered the PACIC in a private exam room.
- The investigator (PD) collected additional study data as described above.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Implementation, data collection and administration of the questionnaire was straightforward and did not interfere or prolong patient appointments. Thus, testing patient-to-provider collaboration could potentially be a component of visits for patients with chronic illness. However, further studies are needed to evaluate efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
- Recruitment was suboptimal with the limiting factor being that most subjects could not afford Hemoglobin a1c testing as part of their diabetic management.
- No statistically significant associations between our main variables of patient and provider collaboration (PACIC score) and glycemic control (HbA1c) were found. Analysis of potential confounders also failed to illicit any correlations.
- The major limitation in our study stems from our small sample size. An important next step would be to repeat this study with a larger sample and currently, the process of gathering additional subjects is underway.
- In summary, it is unclear what impact patient-physician collaboration will have on glycemic control in type 2 diabetics. However, if results are favorable, as suggested by past research, and demonstrate a clinical benefit, the PACIC could potentially be an additional tool for physicians treating type 2 diabetes in controlling this disease and limiting complications.

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- **REFERENCES**