

Treatment adherence in patients with diabetes: why caregivers should actually “care”

Cases of adult onset diabetes are on the rise. Despite the increasing number of available treatment options, there is no cure for diabetes. Managing the disease requires a series of life changes that may include dietary restrictions, a combination of medications, and constant monitoring. However, patients often fail to follow through, increasing their risk of preventable complications (i.e., kidney failure, heart attack, stroke, and blindness) and even death.

This study suggests that patients with positive motivators tend to better adhere to treatment. We surveyed 474 patients and found that compassionate and optimistic care provision is directly associated with patient coping ability, which in turn leads to greater adherence to treatment.

This differs from the traditional methods of medical care, where the patient has little autonomy and no say in the decision-making process. Our study demonstrates that patients have begun preferring empowerment and autonomy, and this is directly associated with their coping ability. This in turn helps them follow through treatment. This study sheds light on the fact that patients who lack the opportunity to communicate their feelings have fewer opportunities to gain perspectives on their care, which leads to greater dissatisfaction and disengagement. Conversely, patients who feel like their concerns are being understood and respected tend to be more engaged, and therefore more compliant, with their own treatment. This study has the potential to improve communication practices of medical care providers, thus enhancing the outcome of treatment.