AD-1603 Problems and challenges of type 2 diabetes management from the doctors and patients perspectives

Starostina E.G., Dreval A.
Moscow Regional Research and Clinical Institute, Moscow, Russia

BACKGROUND

Patient-physician communication is an important part of diabetes care that may influence the outcomes (1,2). Better understanding of the problems of an individual patient could help to develop his/hers higher motivation for the effective self-management. Patient’s and physician’s views on the patient’s problems may be culture- and country-specific.

AIM

To identify the most challenging issues in diabetes management and living with diabetes from the point of view of patients compared to that of physicians.

STUDY DESIGN

A survey was conducted in three regions of Russia with an identical questionnaire in doctors and patients (two unrelated cohorts).

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

The doctors sample: 180 randomly selected doctors, 101 of them endocrinologists and 79 internists (two specialties involved in diabetes care in Russia). The doctors had been in practice for 0,5 to 45 years and were seeing on average 150 and 15 type 2 patients monthly (endocrinologists and internists, respectively).

The patients sample: 320 consecutively recruited type 2 diabetic patients (F : M = 239 : 81, age 40 to 84 years, duration of diabetes 0,5 to 36 years, HbA1c level of 5,3 to 14,7% (mean $\pm$ SD 9.1 $\pm$ 1.8%).

Survey questionnaire: The doctors and the patients were proposed an identical list of various aspects of diabetes management/living with diabetes and asked to choose 3 of them which they believed to be most challenging *for patients*.

Statistics: Differences in proportions were tested with χ^2 or Fischer’s exact test. For any correlations between doctors and patients opinions, the Pearson’s correlation coefficient was calculated. Results were considered significant at alfa level < 0,05.

RESULTS

In fact, all problems of diabetes management that the patients could meet with, except oral therapy and hypoglycemia, were differently rated by the doctors and by the patients. No correlation between rankings made by the patients and the doctors was found. No major differences between choices made by the endocrinologists and by the internists were observed, except that endocrinologists considered psychological problems and diabetes-related financial problems as more important than internists did. The opinions of the doctors was unrelated to their working experience.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The survey shows a dramatic discordancy in the views of doctors and patients on the most challenging and problematic aspects of living with diabetes and diabetes management. The results obtained demonstrate a lack of a major pre-requisite for effective diabetes management, i.e. an agreement between a doctor and a patient on the most important problems that is necessary to make patients motivated and actively participating in their self-management. The difference between the doctors’ and the patients’ perspectives was unrelated to the doctors’ length of experience with diabetes care, and was almost unrelated to their specialty (endocrinologist or internist). The major limitation of our study was that we were unable to link the results with the quality of diabetes care provided by the doctors in their patients, because the survey in doctors and patients was conducted in different clinics.

From the patients’ perspective, the three most challenging issues for the patients were: late complications, causes/mechanisms of diabetes, and diet. There were no differences in the choices between insulin-treated (n=84) and non-insulin treated (n=236) type 2 diabetic patients, with their rankings of the problems being highly correlated (Spearman’s $r=0.96$, $p<0.00001$). No associations between the choices of patients and their glucose control were found. From the doctors’ perspective, the patients are mostly challenged by diet, late complications and financial issues of living with diabetes.

1. Stewart M. Can Med Assoc J. 1995;152(9):1423
2. Polonsky WH et al. Diabetes Res Clin Pract. 2017;127:265
Copyright © 2017 Elena Starostina elena.starostina@rambler.ru