

**Interests and Preferences of Patients in
a Rural Family Medicine Practice
Regarding Diabetes Education**

The Problem

Diabetes is a growing problem throughout the country. There is a general lack of patient knowledge regarding the disease's prevention and management. The purpose of this study is to gauge patient knowledge of diabetes in a rural family medicine clinic. That information will be used to tailor future educational efforts regarding diabetes.

Methods of Study

Conducted over a three week period in December 2005 in the office of Dr. Jack Spaniol, a family physician in Charleston, Illinois. Patients presenting for an office visit were asked to complete an anonymous survey while they waited in the exam room. The survey was designed to assess the patients' knowledge of diabetes, and their own personal risk factors for developing diabetes.

Study Population

41 participants: 18 men (43.9%), 23 women (56.1%)

4 (9.76%) self-reported having elevated fasting blood sugar (pre-diabetes).

2 (4.88%) self-reported having Type 1 diabetes (“juvenile onset”, or “insulin-dependent”).

8 (19.5%) self-reported having Type 2 diabetes (“adult-onset”).

Patient Attitudes

When asked, “On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable do you feel regarding your understanding of diabetes (1 = no understanding, 10 = perfect understanding)?”, participants averaged 6.46.

When asked, “Would you benefit from education during office visits regarding diabetes?”, 13 (31.7%) responded “yes”.

Community Diabetes Education

Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center, located between Mattoon and Charleston, IL, sponsors a program called “Step In The Right Direction”. This program is open to members of the community with the diagnoses of elevated fasting blood sugar (pre-diabetes) or Type 2 diabetes. Participants are involved in structured exercise in the hospital’s fitness center, and are educated about health issues regarding diabetes.

Desire for Additional Community Education

Would you attend community presentations given by the following?

Physicians	12	29.3%
Nurse Practitioners/ Physician Assistants	6	14.6%
Certified Diabetes Educators	12	29.3%
Would Not Attend	14	34.1%

Conclusions

32 study participants (78.0%) were not aware of “Step in the Right Direction”.

Of those who were aware of “Step in the Right Direction”, and were eligible, 4 (9.76%) chose not to participate.

Statistics suggest lack of community understanding that Type 2 diabetes is caused/ made worse by poor long-term lifestyle choices.

Possible Future Directions

Need for greater patient understanding of long-term lifestyle choices to prevent and improve the course of Type 2 diabetes.

Need for greater promotion of community health programs, such as “Step in the Right Direction”.

Need for greater understanding of patient attitudes regarding Type 2 diabetes among health care providers.