

MAPHM Symposium 2017

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Abstract Title:

Living with diabetes: education and weight management

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Abstract

Issue/Problem

Diabetes results in elevated levels of blood sugar which over time can lead to serious damage to the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves. Type 2 diabetes is the most common type effecting around 10% of the Maltese adult population. Moreover it has been found that typically such individuals are overweight or obese. This contributes further to disease progression and cardiovascular disease. If overweight or obese individuals with type 2 diabetes are able to lose weight, they can expect substantial health benefits in glycaemia, lipidaemia, and blood pressure control.

Method

The aim of this intervention is to provide adult patients with diagnosed type 2 Diabetes, who attend the Diabetes and Endocrine Centre, with the opportunity to undergo an educational and intensive weight management programme.

The Diabetes Education Sessions, an educational programme provided at Mater Dei Hospital, was restructured to focus on weight management. This included dietary and nutritional advice, aerobic fitness and behavior change therapy. The new structure was based on a literature review and various stakeholder meetings. The revised programme called 'Living with Diabetes: education and weight management' consists of a one to one session and 8 weekly group sessions (with a follow up session at week 12) delivered by a multidisciplinary team at Mater Dei Hospital. The programme was initiated in May 2015 and is ongoing. Measured outcomes include waist circumference and weight, self-reported physical activity levels and a knowledge questionnaire. This programme is in line with the National Strategy for Diabetes.

Results

In 2017 the first 8 programmes were reviewed. On average each class consisted of 10 participants. A typical participant lost 2.2 kilograms, and 3.4 centimeters in waist circumference over 12 weeks. Over 12 weeks the average participant increased his/her weekly moderate intensity physical activity levels from a baseline of 120 minutes by 89 minutes. The majority of the participants answered the knowledge questionnaire correctly.

Lessons



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This intervention resulted in a sustained weight loss (progressive during the whole 12 weeks) and motivated the participants to increase their physical activity levels. The intervention will in the future also be offered to patients attending primary health care centres as well as to patients being managed in Gozo.

Message

A diabetes educational programme can provide participants with relevant information on diabetes, thus helping to improve their health literacy. Integrating weight management complements this by motivating and guiding participants to lose weight so as to manage diabetes better.