

COMPLICITY IN COMPLEXITY : an interdisciplinary partnership for the follow-up of diabetes patients in primary care.

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OBJECTIVE:

Therapeutic education is considered to be crucial for the follow-up of diabetes patients. Our aim is to integrate this interdisciplinary approach into the family doctor's consulting rooms.

METHOD:

The physician requires the help of a nurse specialised in diabetes care. They meet with the patient in an “all-together consultation”, set the therapeutic objectives and coordinate their work. After this the nurse can also follow-up the patient at his residence or at her office.

RESULTS:

4 specialized nurses and 17 physicians started the project with 74 patients. 7 patients dropped out. Average age: 60. Average duration of diabetes: 5 years (0 to 29).

50% of the patients answered the evaluation. ¾ stated that they would not have met the specialised nurse outside this setting. 88% of them considered having benefited from a therapeutic education involving knowledge of the disease care and practical skills. 100% felt integrated in their follow-up and helped to be more active in their self-management. 78% had their HbA1C measured during follow-up with an average reduction of 1% (8,4 to 7,4).

90% of the physicians and nurses were positive about their partnership allowing the access of the patient to therapeutic education and the sharing of information.

CONCLUSION:

To reach more patients, we decided to bring therapeutic education closer to the patient, at her/his own doctor's consultation rooms. Most of the family doctors were able to set up an interdisciplinary partnership with the specialised nurse. The patients felt encouraged to be more active in their follow-up. This could explain the improvement of their glycaemic control.