University of Huddersfield Repository

Brooks, Joanna, Kime, Nicky, King, Nigel, Wearden, Alison, Gillibrand, Warren P., Webster, Liz and Campbell, Fiona

Young people with diabetes and their peers

Original Citation


This version is available at http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/21755/

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/
Young people with diabetes and their peers

Jo Brooks1, Nicky Kime2, Nigel King3, Alison Wearden3, Warren Gillibrand4, Liz Webster5, Fiona Campbell6

1University of Huddersfield; 2Leeds Beckett University; 3University of Manchester; 4Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

The social focus of young people shifts through adolescence from their family to their friends. Peer influences can have an impact across a range of adolescent behaviours1.

Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) is amongst the most common form of chronic illness affecting young people in the UK. Self-management is crucial, but managing their T1D is often difficult for young people2.

Interventions to support self-management in young people with T1D could usefully include their friends and peers3, but there has been little examination of how peers think about and respond to T1D. The aim of this work was to explore what peers know about the condition, and their attitudes and responses to it.

We used a qualitative approach, and conducted interviews with 10 adolescent T1D patients aged 13-15, along with a nominated close friend (n=20). We then carried out focus group sessions with participants without any necessary prior knowledge of T1D (n=15) in a secondary school setting. Full necessary ethical approvals were gained. We used Template Analysis4, a flexible but structured form of thematic analysis which emphasises hierarchical coding, to analyse data.

**Interviews**
- Limited awareness of T1D amongst peer group generally reported by all participants;
- Although patient participants were confident they could rely on their close friends should they need assistance in relation to T1D, friends themselves varied considerably in the extent of their T1D knowledge;
- Both pragmatic and emotional support was provided by close friends who play a valuable role in recognising the importance of T1D management, whilst also importantly accepting and normalising the condition;
- Considerable variations in experiences of support in school environment reported.

**Focus groups**
Educational materials designed in response to issues raised in the interviews were piloted with three focus groups. Sessions were structured as follows:

1. **What do you know already?** Participants were asked for three words associated with ‘diabetes’- these were then attached to one large piece of paper and discussed amongst all group members;
2. **What would you do?** Realistic vignettes developed from the interviews were used to facilitate group discussion, assessing the situations described from the viewpoint of different actors;
3. **Basic information and myth busting.** Discussion of misconceptions about T1D (reported in the interview stage as commonly encountered by participants) and some basic information about T1D given by facilitator.

**This work highlights the need for greater awareness of T1D in schools amongst teachers and peers, but encouragingly suggests that simple and easy to run educational sessions may be well-received.** The evident lack of standardised school policies in relation to diabetes management is worrying, and should be improved to ensure there are no barriers to optimal self-management for young people with T1D.