

Improving Education for Diabetics with Low Health Care Literacy
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Problem: The prevalence of Diabetes Mellitus, (DM) in New York City is twice that of the national average. Mandated electronic surveillance of Hg A1C test results was initiated by the NYC Department of Health in 2006, to identify demographic populations most at risk. Aggregates of low income, low health literacy and racial groups faced a higher rate of uncontrolled DM and related deaths. Over 500,000 people in New York receiving medical model Adult Day Health Center (ADHC) services, represents similar group disparities.

Evidence: A screening campaign of Hg A1C testing was initiated at two (ADHC) to determine clients who needed improved management skills. Results of greater or equal to 7.5mg/dL were benchmarked as elevated. Nurses assessed for barriers to treatments, and identified health care illiteracy as a common thread.

Strategy: The goal was to develop an educational program empowering clients to enhance the quality of their treatment more efficiently.

Practice Change: Educational sessions consisted of teaching the ABCs of Diabetic Management, using verbal presentations, accompanied by pictographs and numerical parameters in handouts. The clients' personal data for HgA1C, blood pressure and lipid profiles were written next to the desired values, to engage the individuals in self management. Appointments for eye and foot exams were assigned in pictorial format.

Evaluation: Forty-four percent of all the Diabetics had HgA1C greater or equal to 7.5mg/dL. Seventy-nine percent of this group agreed to enter the ADHC EBP Research Collaborative- Diabetes Management Study. These individuals will receive EBP treatment for DM, such as quarterly HgA1C tests, blood pressure control monitoring, lipid profile management and eye and foot examinations.

Results: Seventy-nine percent of clients attended the educational campaign. Understanding all aspects of DM care enhanced engagement in EBP health care strategies. These clients will participate in a multisite study.

Recommendations: ADHC nursing education should include assessment for health care literacy. This information was disseminated at the ADHC annual conference.

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