

Diabetes support -- actions speak louder than words

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For physicians treating patients with diabetes, practical support is important in improving glycemic control. Researchers writing in the open access journal *BMC Public Health* found that setting goals and proactive follow-up helped patients achieve good glycemic control. In this study, empathic listening and eliciting patient preferences were not associated with differences in glycemic control outcomes.

Jochen Gensichen, from University Hospital Jena, Germany, worked with a team of researchers to correlate 3897 patients' views on their doctors' levels of practical and communicative support with those patient's glycosylated haemoglobin levels. He said, "Despite improvements in the quality of [diabetes](#) care over the last decade, considerable room for improvement remains. Two possible areas where care could be improved are in doctor-patient communication and levels of practical support offered. We sought to assess the effects of these factors on glycemic control".

The researchers found that physicians' characteristic level of practical support was associated with more favorable glycemic control outcomes. Contrary to their expectations, physicians' level of communicative support was not associated with differences in glycemic control, although practical and communicative support were correlated.

According to Gensichen, "These results suggest that physicians who typically offer higher levels of practical support for diabetes self-management have patients who achieve more favorable glycemic control

at follow-up. While patient ratings of physicians' communicative support were not associated with glycemic control, measures of communicative and practical support were correlated so these two forms of support may be viewed as complementary".

More information: Physician support for diabetes patients and clinical outcomes, Jochen Gensichen, Michael VonKorff, Carolyn M Rutter, Michelle D Seelig, Evette J Ludman, Elizabeth HB Lin, Paul Ciechanowski, Bessie A Young, Edward H Wagner and Wayne J Katon, [BMC Public Health](#) (in press), www.biomedcentral.com/bmcpublichealth/

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