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A Pilot Study: a Stress Management Program for Patients with Type 2 Diabetes to Modulate Diabetes Related Stress

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Introduction

Patients with Type 2 Diabetes require an integrated care and management program to sustain optimal glycemic control and to prevent development of complications. Very often, psychological and stress management are being neglected. However, people with diabetes have been found to develop higher rates of anxiety and depression. By helping them learn how to manage their stress, hopefully, can enhance their ability to cope with life stress and to better engage in diabetes self-management.

Objectives

With this aim in mind, we designed a pilot program for stress management program to the diabetes patient support group of the Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital to enhance patients' ability and motivation in coping with stress.

Methodology

A 'Patient Wellness Flower Arrangement Workshop' is organized and targeted patients with type 2 diabetes at age 18-70. A total of 27 participants recruited by random drawing from a pool of applications. They are asked to fill in questionnaires of the WHO-5 Well-Being Index and PHQ-9 Patient Health Questionnaire- Depression Test Questionnaire before the workshop and 2-3 months afterwards via phone follow up. Also, a debriefing session immediate after the workshop was held by a diabetes nurse to draw the feedback from the participants.

Result

There were 22 female and 1 male with a mean age of 59. There was a difference found on PHQ-9 but not WHO-5 before and 2-3 months afterwards, showing positive changes on reducing depressive symptoms and achieved statistically significance ($p=0.01$). From the debriefing session, feedback drawn from the participants are very positive and encouraging. They have a strong sense of achievement especially when they bring their finishing products, the flower pots, back home. Most of them express that they do not believe that they could really make it. The outcome is that they become happier and more relaxed.

The essence of this workshop is that while they are making their own flower pots, they are focus themselves at present, thus they leave their life stress asides and become more relax. This, in turn, may reduce their body's hormonal response to stress, so that they can deal with their problems with a clear and peaceful mind later.

This pilot study recognizes the multiple aspects of living the best life possible with diabetes. We plan to further investigate the disputable relationship between stress management and negative impacts of diabetes related stress on glycemic control by a more structured program design and other relaxation therapy will be considered.