



CLINICAL DIABETES MANAGEMENT Pharmacist's Role in Diabetes Care

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[Dan Hazelwood] Thank you for joining us for this edition of Clinical Diabetes Management, brought to you by the National Diabetes Education Program, or NDEP. NDEP is a joint initiative of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health. I'm your host, Dan Hazelwood. Our topic today is the pharmacist's role in diabetes care. Pharmacists are the most readily accessible professionals on the diabetes care team. With me are Don Zettervall from the Diabetes Center in Old Saybrook, Connecticut and Dr. Philip Rodgers, Clinical Pharmacist at Duke University Hospital and Clinical Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina. They are both members of the National Diabetes Education Program. Thank you for joining us today.

[Don Zettervall] Thanks Dan, it's nice to be here.

[Philip Rodgers] Thank you, Dan.

[Dan Hazelwood] Phil, how do pharmacists fit on the diabetes care team?

[Philip Rodgers] There are several thousand patients who are diagnosed with diabetes every day and the majority of them will be prescribed medication and be prescribed also home glucose monitoring and through those means they will interact with pharmacists on a regular basis.

[Don Zettervall] And if I might add, just getting a blood glucose monitoring device doesn't mean the patient knows how to properly use it or when to test their blood sugars, based on the medication that they're receiving.

[Dan Hazelwood] Don, do pharmacists do diabetes education?

[Don Zettervall] Oh, most pharmacists do diabetes education on a daily basis. When patients come in to get medication, they're informing patients of side effects to the various drugs they're using, such as hypoglycemia, and they're also monitoring the results of patient's blood glucose levels to make sure the therapy is actually working.

[Philip Rodgers] That's right, Don. Another way that pharmacists can become involved with diabetes education is by becoming certified diabetes educators. There's other certifications that pharmacists can get that can also help enhance their skills in counseling and managing diabetes patients.

[Dan Hazelwood] Phil, don't doctors provide the medication information the patient needs? What else can a pharmacist add?

[Philip Rodgers] Pharmacists can add a lot to the care of patients with diabetes beyond just medication information. There's a good amount of counseling on the medications, of course, that

occurs with pharmacists. Advice on side effects and drug interactions is always an important job of the pharmacist. But the pharmacist can also help guide the patient in selecting blood glucose meters and over-the-counter diabetes supplies.

[Don Zettervall] And I also might add that pharmacists, being readily accessible, allows them to interact with patients and they oftentimes will pick up complications that may be developing and refer them to the appropriate health care professionals, such as podiatrists or optometrists for eye exams.

[Dan Hazelwood] Don, what else can pharmacists do for people with diabetes?

[Don Zettervall] Well, pharmacists routinely review therapy and treatment for patients with diabetes, and many of them are now providing medication therapy management and it's a service that works with doctors to provide the most appropriate therapy for patients with diabetes.

[Dan Hazelwood] OK, now how do you mean that the pharmacists can actually help the doctors choose the most appropriate therapy?

[Don Zettervall] Well, in most states, pharmacists can now enter collaborative practice agreements that allow the pharmacist to actually alter medications or adjust doses to get the most appropriate therapy for each patient, individually, to get the best outcomes. It also helps screen for problems that may develop and it gets patients to goal much quicker.

[Philip Rodgers] Absolutely, Don. Pharmacists in many different practice settings can become involved with collaborative practice agreements and medication therapy management from retail to clinic-based settings to all other areas of pharmacy where they might interact with diabetes patients.

[Dan Hazelwood] Phil, where can health care professionals go to get more information about the pharmacist's role in diabetes care?

[Philip Rodgers] An excellent source for this information is the website www.YourDiabetesInfo.org, a site put on by the NDEP. There you can find a document called *Working Together To Manage Your Diabetes* which focuses on the importance of the team care approach and the critical concepts all health care professionals should understand about diabetes on the foot, eye, oral health, and the role pharmacists play on the diabetes team.

[Dan Hazelwood] Is *Working Together* available for continuing education credit?

[Philip Rodgers] Yes, it's available for one hour of CE credit for pharmacists and is available for credit for other health care professionals.

[Dan Hazelwood] Don, what else is available from NDEP?

[Don Zettervall] Well, the most popular document from NDEP is the *Working Together To Manage Diabetes Medication Supplement*. This supplement provides a quick reference for

prescribing information on medications that include things like the dosing, the side effects, method of action for medications, such as those used for blood glucose, blood pressure, and lipid control.

[Dan Hazelwood] What is the one take-home message you'd like to leave with our listeners?

[Don Zettervall] I think one of the most important take-home messages is to get patients to talk with their pharmacists because of the availability of that professional in the community setting and that pharmacists can really help improve a patient's diabetes management by working with them directly and with their doctors.

[Philip Rodgers] And I'd also like to add that patients should also be encouraged to talk to their pharmacists each time they come in to get a prescription. Every time they come in they can ask a question about issues that arise or how to problem-solve some things that come up related to their medication or their diabetes in general.

[Dan Hazelwood] Thank you, gentlemen. The National Diabetes Education Program, or NDEP, has more information and free educational materials for health care professionals and for people with diabetes. Visit www.YourDiabetesInfo.org or call toll free, 1-888-693-NDEP.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.