

Using interactive focus groups to improve diabetic management in the community

Sharan Syam and Mubarak Osman

Imperial College London, UK

Abstract

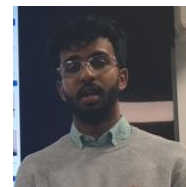
Statement of the Problem: Diabetes is a poorly managed condition in the community with diabetes drug adherence as low as 36% among different populations [1]. 31.4% of the local population in Shepherd's Bush do not speak English as a main language, demonstrating how language barriers could be affecting their healthcare [2]. We carried out a need's analysis survey showing 70% wanted more information about medications and 45% said they did not know what to do if they experienced a side effect. Our aim was therefore to produce a leaflet and organise small focus group sessions targeting these concerns, with translations being provided.

Methodology: The main barriers to diabetic care management were identified in our research as being poor medication adherence, travel, language barriers in communication and health illiteracy. In collaboration with Diabetes UK, a leaflet was created in both Arabic and English addressing these barriers. Diabetic patients in a practice in Shepherds bush (n=650) were recruited by text message to participate in an interactive focus group. Partaking patients (n=20) filled in questionnaires on various adherence parameters before and after the focus group. Data was then analysed using Mann-Whitney-U tests and compared.

Results: The focus group enabled certain barriers to adherence to diabetic medication to be overcome with patients showing a statistically significant decrease in concern over perceived side effects of medications ($p < 0.001$), and an increase in understanding of efficacy of medications ($p < 0.01$). 90% of patients said they now felt more confident in managing their diabetes.

Conclusion Significance: Ten-minute consultations in general practice settings are often insufficient to gauge patient understanding on their condition, and this was reflected in our pre-focus group survey. Regular focus group sessions are a simple but effective way of educating patients on their condition, encouraging them to be more proactive in managing their condition, and preventing complications.

Sharan Syam is current third year medical students at Imperial College London. They are interested in teaching and research, particularly in the fields of public health, with a focus on diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Sharan has carried out previous research in improving adherence to cardiovascular medications and has developed an interactive app prototype to target this problem. Mubarak has also carried out previous research, investigating the effects of point-of-care C-Reactive Protein testing on the length of stay of paediatric A&E patients. They hope to develop new methods to target public health problems within the community setting, as they have done with their current research in investigating the potential for focus group sessions in general practice, with the aim to improve medication adherence and to reduce the potential for any disease-specific complications.



Speaker Publications:

1. Using interactive focus groups to improve diabetic management in the community. Publication date April 15, 2020 publication description International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.

14th European Diabetes and Endocrinology Congress; London, UK - April 15-16, 2020

Abstract Citation:

Sharan Syam, Using interactive focus groups to improve diabetic management in the community, Euro Endocrinology 2020, 14th European Diabetes and Endocrinology Congress; London, UK - April 15-16, 2020.

(<https://europe.endocrineconferences.com/abstract/2020/using-interactive-focus-groups-to-improve-diabetic-management-in-the-community>)



Biography: