



Title: The Delivery of Nutrition Information for People with Type 2 Diabetes in Community Pharmacies, a Pilot Project

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Introduction

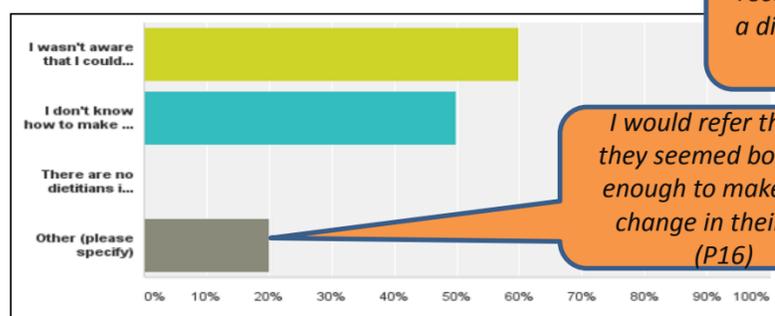
The NHS in England expects all healthcare professionals (HCPs) to support patients to being able to promote and manage their own health' (DoH, 2013). Dietitians are the only HCP specifically trained to deliver nutritional advice however there are not enough dietitians to see all individuals who need nutritional advice (Thompson et al., 2003). Every HCP is likely to come into contact with people with type 2 diabetes (T2DM). In particular this applies to pharmacists who through their accessibility are in a key position to deliver nutritional advice. However there is evidence to suggest that HCPs who are not specifically trained in nutrition may lack the skills and knowledge which may affect their ability to deliver nutritional advice. (NNEdPro, 2014). Community pharmacists (CPs) provide expert and accessible services for people with T2DM. Services may include nutritional advice however it is unknown to what extent this is provided in practice.

The aim of the project was to pilot a questionnaire that explored the role of pharmacists in giving nutritional advice for people with T2DM.

Findings

All 16 CPs who responded saw people with T2DM at least daily. They only sometimes gave nutritional advice, taking the form of a general conversation about food. A lack of knowledge was the main barrier to giving advice. Five (36%) respondents gave written information and 12 (86%) recommended written nutritional information, mainly from a national diabetes charity. Most CPs (10, 71%) did not refer people with T2DM to a dietitian. Postgraduate or CPD courses or own reading were cited by the 4 (28%) respondents who said they had received nutrition training, however undergraduate training was not mentioned as a source.

Reasons for not referring on to a dietitian



I can only recommend seeing a dietitian, I cannot refer.(P8)

I would refer them if they seemed bothered enough to make a big change in their diet (P16)

Respondents viewed positively their potential role in delivering nutritional advice to people with T2DM

With training, time and access to specific good information, nutritional advice could become part of the lifestyle information giving during a medicine review (P1)

From a health promotion role giving nutritional advice is very important, your survey has highlighted that we could increase our role in giving specific tailored advice to type 2 diabetics. (P6)

Method

The survey was reviewed and developed with pharmacy staff from the university involved in the development of pharmacy services (Ali et al, 2012) and through field research with local pharmacists. The questionnaire was uploaded into an online system (Survey Monkey) and emailed to pharmacies in one county in the east of England. The questionnaire was open over a 3 week period during the summer of 2015. Data were downloaded into excel and analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

Form of nutritional advice given

| Form | % of those who answered (n=14) | number |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| We talk generally about food | 79 | 11 |
| Give a leaflet | 36 | 5 |
| Refer to a website | 57 | 8 |
| Advice on appropriate food choices | 57 | 8 |
| General ideas on meal planning | 21 | 3 |
| A tailored meal plan | 7 | 1 |
| Ideas for shopping | 14 | 2 |
| Ideas for recipes | 7 | 1 |
| Ideas for eating out | 0 | 0 |

Discussion

This was a small study which aimed to further develop and pilot an online questionnaire with community pharmacists. The responses suggest that community pharmacists are committed to their role in the prevention and management of nutrition related diseases through the delivery of generalised nutritional advice. However the limited access to undergraduate training and to written resources combined with the lack of awareness and /or access to dietetic services may prevent them from having a greater role in this. Although the study was administered over a short period during the summer months, the large number of potential respondents suggest that the online delivery of the questionnaire should be reviewed for future projects.

Conclusion

Further research is needed to explore how to build upon community pharmacists' accessibility and commitment to the delivery of nutritional advice and support in the management of T2DM.