Diabetes, Self Management and Cognition

A. Tomlin¹, A. Sinclair¹, K. Asimakopoulou² and R. Driver¹

¹ Institute for Health Research, University of Bedfordshire
² Dentistry (Research Division), King’s College London

This study is being conducted at the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Medical School and the Department of Psychology at the University of Bedfordshire. The researchers have recently gained approval from the Local NHS Research Ethics Committee to carry out the first stages of the investigation at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital.

Background and aims

Diabetes is a largely self-managed condition. Whilst healthcare professionals offer education, treatment, and support, the patient is principally responsible for the day to day management of the condition. Self management tasks are many and varied and can include dietary management, monitoring of blood glucose, and insulin injecting. People with diabetes must employ a variety of skills in order to successfully self-manage.

Methods

Informal discussion with patients and health care professionals led to the construction of a series of questionnaires assessing attitudes towards diabetes self-management. Data from the questionnaires will inform the content of video-recorded interviews which in turn will allow the development of an assessment schedule to measure self-management ability. Cognitive ability will also be assessed, using a series of tests from the Cambridge Automated Neuropsychological Test Battery [6-7], and a selection of paper and pencil tests, including the Digit Symbol Substitution Test [8], Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) [9], National Adult Reading Test (NART) [10] and Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) [11]. Interventions intended to improve self-management skills will then be evaluated in the context of the results found.

There has been much research around the subject of cognition in diabetes. Several studies have proposed a link between diabetes and cognitive dysfunction, and found the association to be stronger in those who have had diabetes for longer [1-2]. Although there are many studies which have looked at diabetes and cognition, or diabetes and self-management, few have looked at all three together [3-5]. Our study aims to investigate the relationship between cognitive dysfunction in diabetes and its effects on ability to self-manage the condition.

References


There has been much research around the subject of cognition in diabetes. Several studies have proposed a link between diabetes and cognitive dysfunction, and found the association to be stronger in those who have had diabetes for longer [1-2]. Although there are many studies which have looked at diabetes and cognition, or diabetes and self-management, few have looked at all three together [3-5]. Our study aims to investigate the relationship between cognitive dysfunction in diabetes and its effects on ability to self-manage the condition.