

Improving quality of life for diabetic patients and delaying cardiovascular complications

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The number of people suffering from diabetes in the world is constantly growing, and diabetes has become a global pandemic of the modern era. According to data from the CroDiab Registry in 2022, there were 388,213 people with diabetes in Croatia.¹ Some older studies suggest that almost half of those affected do not have a formal diagnosis, which implies an estimate of around 500,000 people with diabetes in Croatia. Lifestyle changes such as unhealthy diet, smoking, obesity, sedentary living, and stress have contributed to this. If not well regulated, diabetes brings with it many complications, including cardiovascular diseases, kidney damage, and vision impairment. On average, diabetes shortens life expectancy by 15 years. People with diabetes have a 2 to 3 times higher risk of heart failure and an increased risk of myocardial infarction. According to the World Health Organization, data based on the cardiovascular mortality rate indicate that Croatia is a high-risk country.^{2,3}

A multidisciplinary team plays a key role in the treatment of patient with diabetes. Achieving glyce-mic control in patients is important, but so is changing their lifestyle habits. The role of a nurse in the treatment of patients with diabetes is significant, whether it involves a hospitalized patient or one in a daily diabetology clinic.⁴ The main task is to educate the patient about new knowledge and skills and to check their adoption of these skills. Access should be individual and adapted to each patient's needs. Sufficient time should be allocated for education, speaking slowly and reassuringly, and encouraging the patient to ask questions and actively participate. Patients need motivation and praise for all acquired knowledge and skills at each visit. The goal of education is to empower the patient for self-monitoring, self-help, and self-treatment. Today's modern technologies enable simple and painless glyce-mic control. New devices provide insight into glucose variability, which is a risk factor, enabling better control of diabetes and reducing the risk of complications. Each reduction in HbA1c by 1% reduces the risk of death by 20%, the risk of myocardial infarction by 14%, and the risk of microvascular complications by up to 37%. According to the latest guidelines, devices for continuous glucose monitoring are available to all patients on intensive insulin therapy, including both type 1 and type 2 diabetics. Since type 2 diabetes is the most common form, accounting for up to 90% of all cases, this change is a significant step forward that can lead to improvements in the quality of life of patients with diabetes. Although patients are still more inclined to traditional measurement methods, it is necessary to educate them well, motivate them, and provide support during the adjustment process. Considering the time spent with the patient, a nurse plays a crucial role in training the patient and their family for self-care. Modern technologies have enabled patients with diabetes to receive painless treatment, reducing the number of complications, and consequently, improve their quality of life significantly. It is important to emphasize that modern technologies alone are not enough for success in treatment. A healthy diet, regular physical activity, stress reduction, and proper therapy are fundamental principles that remain key to the successful management of diabetes.

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LITERATURE

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