**Recommendations to a Diabetic Patient on Managing the Condition**

Date

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**Introduction**

Diabetes, especially Type 2 Diabetes (T2D), is an increasing national and global problem whose cases have tripled in the preceding two decades and has aptly been termed a Modern Preventable Pandemic’ (abbreviated MPP) (Singer *et al*., 2022). In this respect, the author, dealing with a diabetic patient, undertook a semi-structured interview with a diabetic patient, a male in his mid-forties that was recently diagnosed with the condition, with the objective of finding out more about the patient in order to provide customized recommendations on the best approaches to manage his condition. The interview summary is provided in the next section, followed by the recommendations for managing the condition, which are evidence-based.

**Summary of the Interview**

A discussion was held with the patient, using semi-structured interviews that allowed for clarification of the questions and asking other questions based on the patient's response. In the semi-structured interview, the patient discussed their experience with diabetes and the challenges they face in managing the condition. They expressed concerns about their diet, medication adherence, and incorporating physical activity into their routine. The patient had specific goals of better controlling blood sugar levels, making healthier food choices, and reducing stress related to diabetes management. The patient stated he was diagnosed with the condition five weeks ago and alluded to the condition having an impact on his life, such as having to monitor his blood sugar levels and having to adjust his overall lifestyle, but he is not sure of the best way to adjust his lifestyle. The patient said he tries to eat ‘healthy" but remains concerned about his ability to follow through on a healthy diet considering the difficulty in resisting certain (junk) foods that used to be his staple and that he was already experiencing stress. Based on the patients’ responses, the following recommendations are provided: behavior-based interventions for the successful and effective management of the condition.

**Recommendations**

Seek further tests and medical advice.

The patient should consult a healthcare professional specializing in diabetes as soon as possible for further tests. While these recommendations should be effective, it is equally important that the patient consult with a healthcare professional, such as a doctor or registered dietitian, who can provide personalized medical or clinical guidance and recommendations based on their specific health condition and needs, possibly after conducting other tests that could identify any comorbidities. According to Nowakowska *et al*. (2019), the existence of additional chronic conditions in addition to diabetes, especially T2D, significantly impacts the management and treatment of the condition. Further, they (Nowakowska *et al*., 2019) hold that there is little information known about the patterns of comorbidities in people suffering from diabetes, hence the need to obtain medical tests to identify these comorbidities to have a wholesome understanding of the condition.

Adopt a healthy diet and nutrition regimen.

The patient should follow a balanced and nutritious diet, focusing on whole foods, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Emphasize the importance of portion control and monitoring carbohydrate intake, as carbohydrates can significantly affect blood sugar levels. According to Sami *et al*. (2017), the increasing occurrence of diabetes can be attributed to unhealthy eating patterns and a lack of physical activity. The patient should adopt a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats that provides essential nutrients while controlling carbohydrate intake. In addition, he should also control and monitor the portions and calories of the food he takes; a healthy, balanced diet is essential for effective management of diabetes.

Engage in regular physical activity.

The patient is highly encouraged to engage in physical activity, as incorporating regular physical activity into his routine will help improve insulin sensitivity and manage blood sugar levels. Cannata *et al*. (2020), in their study of the effects of physical activity on diabetic patients, established that physical activity, as an integral part of a multi-disciplinary approach, plays a vital role in managing diabetes and optimizing metabolic control. Engaging in regular exercise helps improve insulin sensitivity, regulate blood sugar levels, and enhance overall metabolic function. It can aid in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, reducing cardiovascular risk factors, and improving overall well-being. Combining physical activity with proper nutrition, medication management, and regular medical check-ups creates a comprehensive approach to diabetes management. The patient is encouraged to engage in activities he enjoys, such as walking, swimming, cycling, or any other form of exercise that suits his abilities and preferences.

Adhere to medication and any other prescribed clinical interventions.

The patient should strictly adhere to any prescribed medications as directed by their healthcare professional. Adherence to medication routines is crucial for maintaining stable blood sugar levels. According to Garca-Pérez *et al*. (2013), failure to adhere to recommended treatment and management strategies results in insufficient control of blood sugar levels, which in turn heightens the risk of diabetic complications and mortality. When individuals with diabetes fail to follow prescribed medications, lifestyle modifications, and regular monitoring, their ability to maintain optimal glycemic control is compromised. Poor glycemic control can lead to a range of complications, including cardiovascular disease, kidney damage, nerve damage, and vision problems. Additionally, uncontrolled diabetes significantly increases the likelihood of mortality (Garca-Pérez *et al*., 2013). Therefore, adhering to treatment plans, including medication adherence, regular blood sugar monitoring, and lifestyle modifications, is crucial for the patient to effectively manage diabetes and reduce the risk of complications and mortality. This goes hand-in-hand with regularly undergoing medical check-ups to monitor his diabetes, assess his overall health, and address any potential complications or risk factors early enough. As the patient stated that he has to monitor his blood sugar regularly, it is further stressed that he has to regularly monitor his blood sugar levels using a glucometer. This practice can provide valuable insights into how certain foods, activities, and medications impact their blood sugar levels and help him and his healthcare team make informed decisions.

Stress management

The patient should manage his stress levels effectively, given that the need to make significant adjustments to his lifestyle was already stressing him. Stress has an effect on the levels of blood sugar; according to Sharma *et al*. (2022), elevated blood glucose levels can occur as a result of the release of stress-related hormones. While this response serves a purpose in a person with good health, prolonged exposure can contribute to insulin resistance, adversely affecting or exacerbating the condition. Furthermore, diabetes itself can disrupt the normal regulation of these stress hormones, further exacerbating the condition. In summary, stress-induced hormone release can lead to increased blood sugar levels, which over time can lead to insulin resistance and diabetes. Additionally, diabetes can disrupt the regulation of stress hormones, creating a cycle that contributes to the progression of the disease. As such, he should explore stress-reducing activities like meditation, deep breathing exercises, yoga, or engaging in hobbies he finds relaxing while avoiding stressful situations, including overworking.

Get a Support System

He should seek a support system, such as from family, friends, or diabetes support groups. Sharing experiences and challenges with others who have diabetes can provide emotional support and helpful tips for him to better manage the condition. Individuals experiencing heightened levels of stress often exhibit reduced adherence to their prescribed lifestyle routines. The relationship between stress and compliance is intricate, as the psychological and physiological effects of stress can undermine one's ability to consistently follow recommended behaviors and routines (Wong et al., 2019). When stress levels rise, individuals may find it more challenging to prioritize and maintain healthy habits such as regular exercise, balanced nutrition, medication adherence, and adequate sleep. Consequently, this diminished compliance can have detrimental effects on overall health outcomes and disease management. Understanding the impact of stress on adherence is crucial in developing tailored interventions and support systems that help individuals effectively manage their conditions, even during challenging periods of heightened stress.

**Conclusion**

Managing diabetes requires a comprehensive approach that includes various lifestyle modifications and adherence to medical recommendations. Based on the semi-structured interview with the diabetic patient, several recommendations have been made to help him effectively manage his condition. By following the recommendations provided, including seeking medical advice, adopting a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, adhering to prescribed medications, managing stress, and obtaining a support system, the patient can improve glycemic control, reduce the risk of complications, and enhance overall well-being. Regular monitoring, check-ups, and collaboration with healthcare professionals are essential to ensuring ongoing management and adjustment of the treatment plan as needed. With commitment and support, the patient can lead a fulfilling life while effectively managing their diabetes.

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