**DIABETES AND ITS MANAGEMENT**

During an interview with the individual managing diabetes, several key points were discussed, shedding light on their current lifestyle and challenges, including their dietary habits, physical activity and general lifestyle factors affecting diabetes management. Details about their current dietary practices, including meal frequency and composition were shared. It was noted that the individual had challenges, especially in maintaining a consistent and balanced diet particularly in terms of carbohydrate intake. A discussion about the individual’s current level of physical activity was had, highlighting any barriers or difficulties faced in maintaining a regular exercise routine, while also exploring preferences for physical activities that align with their lifestyle. Other lifestyle factors were also explored, including sleep patterns, stress levels, and how their social dynamics impact their ability to adhere to a diabetes management plan.

The following recommendations were given. The individual should consult with their healthcare team for tailored guidance based on their specific health status and needs. Firstly, there is a need for the individual to consult with a registered dietitian or nutritionist to create a personalized meal plan. A study done by (Maiorino *et al.,* 2017) showed a significant relationship between an individual’s diet and their blood sugar levels. Focusing more on complex carbohydrates as well as incorporating more fibre and moderating portion sizes have been found to help stabilize blood sugar levels. While The American Diabetes Association (ADA) does not recommend any particular diet to prevent type 2 diabetes (American Diabetes Association, 2016), a variety of eating patterns have been shown modestly effective in managing diabetes including Mediterranean-style, Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) style, plant-based (vegan or vegetarian), lower-fat, and lower carbohydrate patterns (Evert *et al*., 2014). However, there is a need for personalized recommendations, acknowledging that each person's response to diet and exercise can vary.

Colberg *et al.,* 2016, in their study on Physical activity/ Exercise and Diabetes: A Position Statement of The American Diabetes Association, determined that adoption and maintenance of physical activity are critical foci for blood glucose management and overall health in individuals with diabetes and prediabetes. Integrating regular physical activity into the routine, tailored to individual preferences is preferable because a mix of aerobic exercises such as walking and swimming, as well as strength training, have been proven to improve insulin sensitivity. Exercising is crucial for weight loss or keeping a healthy weight during diabetic treatment, as well as aiding in the control of blood sugar levels. It is however important to consult one’s primary care physician before beginning or changing their exercise routine to ensure that the activities are safe.

Mathew & Tadi, 2022, record that blood glucose monitoring observes for patterns in the fluctuation of blood glucose (sugar) levels that occur in response to diet, exercise, medications, and or pathological processes associated with blood glucose fluctuations such as diabetes. Unusually high or low blood glucose levels can potentially lead to acute and or chronic, life-threatening conditions The importance of consistent blood sugar monitoring is emphasized, as a tool for understanding the impact of diet and exercise on diabetes management. In case the blood sugar level is abnormal, having regular communication with healthcare providers to adjust medication is needed. Regular check-ups with healthcare providers are of importance as they get to monitor overall health, detect potential complications, and make necessary adjustments to the diabetes management plan.

Stress has been identified as one factor that worsens the diabetes situation (Sharma *et al*., 2022). While stress doesn’t cause diabetes, it has been long established that it has a significant impact on metabolic function. By extending their length, contributing significantly to human illnesses, and serving as a triggering or exacerbating factor, chronic stress can make these consequences harmful. Additionally, lifestyles associated with stress, sedentary life, and unhealthy diet patterns which cause increased weight gain and abnormality associated with glucose and lipid catabolism (Kyrou & Tsigos, 2009). Every individual gets affected by stress as it is a normal human reaction. Having diabetes to manage on top of life’s typical ups and downs can itself be a cause of stress. It is not always easy to live with, and this can often feel worse when many people don’t understand it. In as much as one can’t escape stressful situations, there are things one can do to make them easier to endure. Some of these stress reduction techniques include deep breathing exercises, mindfulness, engaging in hobbies among others.

Having a good quality of sleep has been found to be of significance in diabetes management. Sleep is essential for life and maintenance of body functions. The main role of sleep is to restore a whole body’s balance, including the central nervous system, and it is a daily requirement. CP Kuo *et al*., (2021), in their sudy on sleep quality and associated factors among diabetes mellitus patients found out that good sleep quality has a significant clinical importance in diabetes patients by regulating their blood sugar levels. Poor sleep has been associated with insulin resistance, weight gain and impaired glucose metabolism.

While it is not easy for diabetes patients to have a good sleep due to sleep apnea or sleep disruptions caused by fluctuations in blood sugar levels especially during the night, experts have suggested that establishing a consistent sleep routine, establishing calming activities before bedtime to signal to the body that it's time to wind down, ensuring that the bedroom is conducive to sleep by keeping it dark, quiet, and cool, as well as addressing any factors that may be affecting sleep quality is a great step towards achieving a good quality of sleep and thereby managing diabetes.

Social support from friends, family or diabetes support groups is important for a diabetes patient as it addresses various aspects of their well-being, ranging from emotional and practical assistance to motivation and information sharing. Building and maintaining a supportive network can significantly contribute to the successful management of diabetes and an improved overall quality of life. Managing diabetes can be emotionally challenging and therefore, social support can act as a buffer against stress by providing a means of sharing concerns, seeking advice, and receiving emotional comfort. It also provides a network of individuals who can offer encouragement, empathy, and understanding.

Diabetes management often requires lifestyle changes, such as adopting a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and adhering to medication regimens. Having a support system can provide motivation and encouragement, making it more likely that individuals will adhere to their treatment plans. Social support can involve practical assistance, such as help with grocery shopping, meal preparation, or transportation to medical appointments. These forms of tangible support can make it easier for individuals with diabetes to follow their prescribed treatment plans. Supportive networks can help disseminate accurate information about diabetes, its management, and the latest developments in treatment. In conclusion it is crucial to note that these recommendations are general in nature and not a substitute for personalized advice from healthcare professionals.

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