RESEARCH QUESTION

My major research goal is to understand factors that contribute positively or negatively to adherence for Type II diabetics. I want to know what are levels of adherence exhibited by individuals and the Type II diabetic community as a whole. By knowing this we can develop more effective ways to combat the rise in other health complications for those who are already living with diabetes and possibly even reverse the rates of individuals developing Type II diabetes. Researchers must understand all the factors involved before we can create plausible solutions.

Looking at a small population of Type II diabetics in Denton County, TX I examined the following question:

- How does adherence in Type II diabetics affect blood sugar?
- What factors facilitate adherence?
- What factors inhibit adherence?
- What are the barriers to self-maintenance behaviors?
- What motivates an individual in his or her level of self-maintenance?
- How do these findings compare to similar discussions with other populations?
- What are the underlying factors that people face in adhering to self-maintenance recommendations and in order to understand what keeps people from adhering the meaning of these factors for them must be thoroughly explored.

For this study there were 23 participants, 10 men and 13 women.

Age:
- Range: 26-75
- Average age: 60
- Median: 72

Race/Ethnicity:
- 98% African American
- 12% Hispanic/Latino
- 14% Caucasian

Annual Household Income:
- Range: $10,000-$70,000
- $10,000-$20,000: 20%
- $20,000-$30,000: 9%
- $30,000-$40,000: 5%
- $40,000-$50,000: 5%
- $50,000-$70,000: 5%

KEY FINDINGS

There was a wide variety of factors that either facilitate or inhibit the participants ability to maintain their health with diabetes. The two factors that were most often mentioned were time and money. These were attributed to being both facilitating and inhibiting depending on the element of self-maintenance they were being discussed with. Some of the other factors that were either discussed or underlying what was said are: technology, doctors and healthcare, information, societal change, medication and supplies, physical condition, attitude and emotions, and access. Some of these factors were in only one category, however most of them crossed over into others.

Facilitators
- Technology: advancements in electronic testers makes checking blood levels faster and easier; the internet is a useful information tool
- Money: local programs and healthcare resources for individuals with low incomes were discussed
- Information: again the internet was discussed as a useful tool for information; information lets people know what they are doing wrong and what to do right; doctors who stay on top of the latest information; there are also a lot of places that provide free internet access to information
- Doctors/Healthcare: some participants discussed having good relationships with doctors
- Attitude/Outlook: many people expressed an ability to think of creative ways to fit all of the maintenance behaviors into their lifestyles

Inhibitors
- Time: this was discussed in relation to all of the four main self-maintenance behaviors; participants talked of having no time to cook or eat small frequent meals throughout the day, no time to test throughout the day, no time to exercise, and a lack of time to remember to take medications
- Money: the price of medication that insurance will not pay for, the price of healthy food
- Technology: can be difficult to work and see the numbers on the display of latest blood testers
- Physical condition: can make exercise difficult; physical pain of testing
- Societal change: there was a discussion of how the quality of food has changed, with animals being injected with steroids and a lack of vitamins in the soil; there was also a mention of how the family structure has changed
- Attitude/Outlook: the desire for more willpower was expressed
- Doctors/Healthcare: participants expressed negative experiences with doctors and healthcare providers, with led to a distrust of doctors

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY POPULATION

The focus group participants were recruited from Sweet Talk, a diabetes support and education class offered by the Denton County Health Department. Participants receive a $10 voucher to a local food store for attending the class each month.

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LITERATURE CITED
- American Diabetes Association: Type II Diabetes 
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DISCUSSION

Time and money were repeatedly discussed as major inhibitors to self-maintenance. Time was the biggest inhibitor being said to make all of the four main self-maintenance behaviors difficult. It was said by many participants that they did not have enough time for the self-maintenance activities. It is common in our society for people to use lack of time as an excuse for an inability to do something. More research would need to be done with this group to see if lack of time really is preventing adherence or if there are other issues involved.

Money was also an important issue especially for this population. By comparing the reported incomes and household sizes to the US Census Bureau’s 2006 Chart on Poverty Thresholds I found that of the 17 participants who provided a response to both of these questions, 12 were living at or near the government defined poverty line. Of the remaining 5, 3 are living slightly above whilst the other two are living above it. Given the income status of this population it is understandable that choices for diabetes self-maintenance activities might have to compete with other subsistence activities. For example buying fresh produce over highly processed food might not be the most realistic option since it is widely known that processed foods are cheaper than more healthful foods such as fresh produce.

In addition I would like to explore the meanings understood factors such as societal change. Societal change has many components in it and further research is necessary to unpack this loaded term. What the findings of this study show is that there are many different issues people face in adhering to self-maintenance recommendations and in order to understand what keeps people from adhering the meaning of these factors for them must be thoroughly explored.

Limitations of Study:
- Large size of focus group
- No real group consensus
- Limited in-depth exploration
- Lack of generalizability

Future Research Questions:
- Examine individual levels of adherence to self-maintenance recommendations
- What motivates an individual in his or her level of self-maintenance?
- How do these findings compare to similar discussions with other populations of a different class or ethnic mix?