

Taking control of Type 2 diabetes earlier

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One in four Type 2 diabetics say they still need help to feel in control of their condition and for some it can take up to 18 years if little support is available.

A new study by The University of Nottingham, commissioned by Boots UK, has shown that with the right support it can take as little as a month for people to feel in control of their Type 2 diabetes. And with support tailored to an understanding of the individual's personal journey this could help reduce the time it takes to successfully manage their condition.

The 'Exploring the Experience of Living With and Managing Type Two Diabetes' study, conducted by the Institute of Work, Health and Organizations at The University of Nottingham and Boots UK, was carried out to help shape and improve the Type 2 diabetes offering on the high street. Researchers discovered that the length of time it takes people to successfully adjust to living with Type 2 diabetes varies considerably.

Time from diagnosis to feeling in control

The study population took anywhere from one month to 18 years to adjust but the majority began to feel in control of their Type 2 diabetes two to three years post diagnosis. With 8 per cent of the NHS's £9.8m annual UK diabetes bill being spent on treating complications associated with the condition, helping people to adjust earlier to their condition is crucial for their health.

To help people with Type 2 diabetes feel in control of the long term management of their condition, Boots UK has extended the pharmacy-led support it provides via its new Diabetes Information Service.

Dr. Neil Coulson, Associate Professor of Health Psychology and the study author, said: "There can be an assumption that people diagnosed with the same condition can have similar adjustment pathways. However, speaking first hand to people with Type 2 diabetes reveals there is a need to treat people as individuals, especially those who are getting 'stuck' and need help to move forwards positively in managing their condition. Understanding how people react to initial diagnosis, and then to the challenges they face as they go on their individual journey, in conjunction with an ability to recognise what psychological stage a person is undergoing at any given time, could help us provide more effective support."

Simon O'Neill, Director of Care Policy and Intelligence at Diabetes UK, said: "This study provides an insight into the factors that impact how quickly and successfully people adjust to living with Type 2 diabetes. We hope these findings can help those living with the condition, as well as the healthcare team that supports them, better understand and manage their condition so they can feel in control and better equipped to prevent unnecessary complications."

Three journeys to feeling in control

The study revealed people's response to being diagnosed with diabetes is broadly defined by three scenarios, which have an impact on how quickly and effectively they start to manage their Type 2 diabetes:

- Diabetes was already suspected — i.e. there was a family history of Type 2 diabetes
- Illness — i.e. the individual was experiencing symptoms
- Complete surprise — i.e. no symptoms or family history

Where diabetes was suspected, people experienced an easier journey whereas when it was a complete surprise people had a more variable and difficult experience adjusting.

For the majority of the study participants their subsequent journey mirrored a bereavement-style response of denial, anger, depression, acceptance and finally a sense of hope and positivity for the future, with one in four participants still needing support to reach this final stage. Understanding which emotional stage people are at and how this may affect their behavior could help healthcare professionals provide more effective support to ultimately reduce the time it takes for people to feel in control of their condition.

Peter Bainbridge, Director of Pharmacy Service, Boots UK, said: “This study provides us with valuable insight into how people think, feel and behave following their diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes. This helps us to shape the information and support we offer and is particularly important for helping our pharmacists to have meaningful conversations that make a real difference in motivating people to successfully feel in control of their Type 2 diabetes. We know from the conversations our pharmacists have that if people have support to help them feel in control of their condition, diagnosis can actually be a powerful force for change that has

an overwhelming positive effect on their ability to lead a healthier lifestyle overall.”

Helping patients to overcome the barriers to feeling in control

While the majority of study participants felt supported at diagnosis, nearly a third (28 per cent) found the support available unhelpful or inadequate and 49 per cent feel there is room for improvement in a range of areas. As pharmacy is well placed to help with the management of diabetes, Boots UK is actively providing expert support via its new Diabetes Information Service:

Additional, up to date training for pharmacists and healthcare team members

Boots pharmacists and healthcare team members have had extra training as part of their Continuing Professional Development on how to manage inspiring conversations and offer bespoke support to customers in the management of their Type 2 diabetes. They are available to offer help and support to those living with the condition as well as family members.

More inspiring information about diabetes

Boots UK has launched a Diabetes Information Pack containing expert help and information, practical advice, and signposting to other sources of information for both those living with Type 2 diabetes and their supporters.

Boots.com/diabetes contains a number of videos where healthcare experts answer questions about [Type 2 diabetes](#).

BootsWebMD.com has a specific diabetes health centre which is packed with information and support to help people with diabetes keep up to date with the latest [diabetes](#) news.

Better dietary advice with study participants wanting to know more about what they can eat instead of what they can't eat

Boots pharmacists can provide advice on healthy eating and the importance of a balanced diet and the range of weight management options available.

Help in taking medications correctly

Through the NHS New Medicine Service pharmacists can help answer questions people may have to gain a better understanding of their condition and medication.

Provided by University of Nottingham

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