

Social networking evaluated to improve diabetes management

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(Medical Xpress) -- Researchers at the UC San Diego School of Medicine are evaluating a new social media tool called Wellaho to treat patients with type I and II diabetes. The clinical trial will study whether the use of social networking can improve patient-physician interactions and the patient's overall health and wellbeing.

“This trial will study how an online social network may better enable patient care,” said Jason Bronner, MD, associate clinical professor, UC San Diego School of [Medicine](#) and internist at UC San Diego Health System. “With a controlled group of the patient's clinicians, friends, family and fellow patients, we will measure any changes in knowledge, attitudes and self care towards [diabetes](#).”

Wellaho, developed by Sanitas Inc. in La Jolla, is an interactive online system designed to help patients manage their care outside the hospital. The system is HIPAA compliant, compatible with provider networks, and includes telemedicine capabilities.

“[Social networking](#) provides a common way for patients with chronic disease to learn about their condition while interacting with others in similar situations,” said Bronner. “As opposed to open networks, the use of this tool allows us to ensure that the medical information they receive and share is accurate, safe and absent of advertising.”

The online site provides self-monitoring tools as well as evidenced-based education customized for the patient's specific condition. Subjects will

be monitored for the number of times they access the site, length of use, and number of invited participants. The site will also track measures of weight, blood pressure, and glycosated hemoglobin.

“Long-term, we hope that [patients](#) will learn behaviors that impact blood sugar, control blood pressure, improve satisfaction and potentially decrease cost of care,” said Bronner.

According to the American Diabetes Association, diabetes now affects 25.8 million children and adults in the United States. An additional 79 million Americans are considered pre-diabetic.

Provided by University of California - San Diego

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