

Peer coaching model beneficial for patients with diabetes

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(HealthDay)—Health coaching by peers is associated with a significant reduction in hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) levels among patients treated in public health clinics, according to research published in the March/April issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

David H. Thom M.D., Ph.D., of the University of California in San Francisco, and colleagues examined the impact of peer health coaching on glycemic control among patients from six public health clinics. Twenty-three patients with diabetes with an HbA1c level of less than 8.5 percent were trained as peer coaches. Patients with HbA1c levels of greater than 8.0 percent were randomly assigned to receive either peer coaching (148 patients) or standard care (151 patients).

At six months, the researchers found that HbA1c levels decreased significantly more in the coached versus the usual care group (1.07 versus 0.3 percent; $P = 0.01$). Significantly more patients in the coached group than in the standard care group had a 1.0 percent or more decrease in HbA1c levels (49.6 versus 31.5 percent; $P = 0.001$). At six months, 22.0 percent of patients in the coached group and 14.9 percent of patients in the standard care group had [HbA1c levels](#) of less than 7.5 percent ($P = 0.04$).

"Our study shows that clinic-based peer coaches can take on this role in low-income communities and that peer coaching, when compared with usual care conducted in the same clinics, is associated with a significant improvement in patients' glycemic control," the authors conclude.

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