

COVID-19 pandemic drives innovation in diabetes care

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The COVID-19 pandemic has jumpstarted innovation in health care delivery and allowed for real-world testing of diabetes care models in unprecedented ways, according to a manuscript published in the

Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

For [diabetes](#), which affects half a billion people worldwide, innovation has long been overdue. Currently, less than 50 percent of people with diabetes meet glycemic targets, which minimize the risk of complications. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an opportunity to rapidly implement and test models of diabetes care that were not possible before. These innovative models like telehealth have the potential to improve [medical outcomes](#) and the patient experience beyond the pandemic.

"We need to change the way we provide care, considering that outcomes of people with diabetes have not improved over the last decade," said [task force](#) chair Robert A. Gabbay, M.D., Ph.D., Chief Scientific and Medical Officer of the American Diabetes Association in Arlington, Va., and formerly Chief Medical Officer of the Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston, Mass. "Given the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and diabetes, adoption of these innovations has accelerated in the hopes of creating a 'new normal' and improvements in the care we provide for people with diabetes."

In 2018, the Endocrine Society convened a task force to examine and promote innovative models of care in diabetes. In this perspective, the members of the task force review several models of care including telemedicine, eConsultations and Project Echo—a global tele-mentoring program. They also cover team-based care, pharmacist-led care and the transition from pediatric to adult care.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with an unexpected chance at truly changing the way endocrinology and diabetes care is delivered far into the future," said task force member Shivani Agarwal, M.D., M.P.H, of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, N.Y. "This manuscript highlights recent strides and reminds us of remaining

challenges we must address to sustain innovation."

The task force discusses the challenges to widespread adoption of these new models of care like lack of insurance coverage, technology integration and workforce shortages, and provides potential solutions to foster innovation and create sustainability.

"Embracing new ways of delivering care is going to be important for taking care of large populations of people with complex conditions like diabetes," said Michelle Griffith, M.D., of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. "When we use these innovative models appropriately, we can often give the right care for a given situation more efficiently."

More information: Shivani Agarwal et al. Innovations in Diabetes Care for a Better "New Normal" Beyond COVID-19. *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* Published: 20 October 2020.
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