

# Better physician communication improves health outcomes, say researchers

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A trio of University of Texas at Arlington researchers focused on patient-centered communications has found that women who felt their health concerns were listened to by their health care providers had more

positive outcomes compared to those who did not feel heard.

The study is [published](#) in the journal *PEC Innovation*.

Tiffany Kindratt and Kyrah Brown, both assistant professors of public health in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation, and Grace E. Brannon, assistant professor of communication in the College of Liberal Arts, were coauthors on the study.

Their [research](#) explored "whether or not a patient's doctor was more likely to give them a chance to ask questions, explain things, ask them to teach back what they told them they needed to do for their health, and then confirm their understanding" as characteristics of optimal patient-centered communication, Kindratt said.

Using data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, the researchers examined feedback of nearly 500 non-pregnant women between the ages of 18 and 45 and living with diabetes. Results showed that patients who reported experiencing optimal patient-centered communication were more likely to adhere to a diabetes care regimen.

"We found that the two aspects of communication that were most important to patients were feelings of being listened to and spending enough time with them," Kindratt said.

The care of non-pregnant women of childbearing age had gone underreported in previous work, making this study the first known research of the group in this much detail, the authors said. They hope that their findings can shed light on how addressing diabetes among women earlier can lead them on a path to a successful pregnancy while managing the disease.

"Patient-centered diabetes care is associated with better disease

management," Brown said. "If we can understand what that looks like and improve on it, then more [women](#) with [diabetes](#) may be able to enter pregnancy healthier, which has implications for better pregnancy outcomes."

**More information:** Tiffany B. Kindratt et al, Testing proximal, intermediate, and health outcomes of patient centered communication among non-pregnant women of childbearing age with diabetes mellitus: Findings from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey 2012-2018, *PEC Innovation* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.pecinn.2023.100185](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pecinn.2023.100185)

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