

Study finds 45 minutes of patient education improves chronic disease management

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Just 45 minutes of patient education can improve outcomes for patients with chronic diseases, according to a study in the *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*.

The study, titled The Other 45, assigned 47 [patients](#) who were diagnosed with a chronic disease, like hypertension, COPD, or diabetes, to visit with a second-year [medical student](#) for 45 minutes after seeing their [physician](#). That one-on-one session measurably improved patients' attitudes and abilities in self-managing their care.

Patients also had subsequent follow-up appointments with the students at three weeks and three months after their initial session, and were assessed on a 40 -point questionnaire. Results at both points demonstrated consistent improvement in patients' willingness and capacity to be able to self-manage their care.

"Patients reported a greater understanding of their chronic disease and feeling better equipped to manage their health," said Alexis Stoner, Ph.D., director of Preventive Medicine and Public Health at Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine and lead author of this study. "This is encouraging because these diseases typically require patients to take on a lot of responsibility in their care, often through changes in lifestyle."

The Other 45 directed its efforts to an underserved community, noting the population's higher rates of chronic disease coupled with less exposure and access to accurate health information. By the end of the third visit, patients reported increased confidence in navigating the healthcare system, self-monitoring and insight, and skill and technique acquisition. They also reported decreased emotional distress.

Prior research has demonstrated that educating patients and getting them engaged in their own care significantly improves outcomes and reduces

unnecessary medical costs.

Study authors acknowledge that most hospitals and physician practices don't have access to [medical students](#) who can devote time to patient education. However, they note that nurses, physician assistants or health lifestyle advisors could fill the role.

"As physicians are increasingly held to the standards of value-based care, building in time and staff for patient education will prove critical to demonstrating success," said Stoner.

More information: Alexis M. Stoner et al, The Other 45: Improving Patients' Chronic Disease Self-Management and Medical Students' Communication Skills, *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* (2018). [DOI: 10.7556/jaoa.2018.155](#)

Provided by American Osteopathic Association

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