Social Media Use by Individuals with Diabetes
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BACKGROUND

• Patients are often looking to the internet for information and support related to their chronic health condition.
• Given the growth and widespread nature of online support for those with health conditions, relatively little research has explored specific aspects of online use and associated outcomes among patients with chronic illness, including diabetes. (Peyrot et al., 2005)
• Among patients with diabetes networking via Facebook (Greene et al., 2010), the most common discussion thread topics included:
  o Sharing personal clinical information
  o Requesting disease-specific guidance,
  o Receiving emotional support
• A study of preferences for online diabetes support found that adults generally prefer professionally moderated discussion (Zrebic, 2005)
• Further research should examine how patient preferences and actual use of social media may differ from caregivers or other family members (e.g., spouses).
In addition, the perceived helpfulness of social networking and its relation to coping and self-management has yet to be investigated.

OBJECTIVES

➢ How frequently do people with diabetes access social media related to their disease?
➢ What are the most common reasons for using social media related to living with diabetes?
➢ What are the most common motivators for reading or sharing about diabetes in online communities?
➢ How does accessing social media relate to:
  • Happiness
  • Health-related behaviors
  • Disease management
➢ What are the most important elements of a social media website designed for people with diabetes?

METHOD

• Participants included those who access one of four national diabetes social media websites
• 147 respondents ages 18 years or older completed the survey
• Participants included patients with T1 or T2 diabetes or parents/spouses of patients

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

PANACEA
ONE
2
3
4
5
Duration since Initial Diagnosis

Most significant benefit of participating in diabetes social media

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

➢ What is your most memorable experience with diabetes social media?
  • Discovering my favorite blog...it was amazing how closely I related and how comforting it was to know that someone else experienced the same things
  • Learning that I’m not alone
  • Sharing my positive physician visits
  • Reading the responses after I completed my first half marathon with T1D
  • Getting up to date technological advances
  • Helping someone who was newly diagnosed feel a bit calmer

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

➢ If you could design the ideal social media site for people living with diabetes, what would you include?
  • Broad input from primary care, endocrinologists, and mental health professionals
  • Research explained in simple terms
  • More humor
  • A section about new technology and advances in the field
  • Ways to meet up locally
  • Famous people living with diabetes and how they are doing it
  • Different blog spheres – one for patients and one for their loved ones
  • More ways for kids to connect

OUTCOMES

I feel ______ right after reading or sharing about diabetes online

Most significant benefit of participating in diabetes social media

Purpose of Social Media Use

1. Having my voice heard (i.e., blogging)
2. Finding information related to coping with diabetes
3. Finding supportive words/stories/comments
4. Having conversations/interactions about a topic
5. Networking and finding others with common experiences
6. Finding information related to diabetes care and management

FREQUENCY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE

For this study, social media is defined as “diabetes-specific online communities to share information, ideas, & comments about diabetes.” This includes writing blogs, reading personal or informational blogs, tweeting, posting on Facebook, or chatting with others online about diabetes. This does not include email, text messaging, or ‘surfing’ the internet for general information in a non-interactive way.