D3.5: Cognitive Appraisal of Perceived Threat of Diabetes and Adherence to Self-Management Behaviors

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Abstract:
Introduction: Self management of chronic disease is crucial to meeting the health care challenges in the next decade. The purpose of this exploratory, descriptive study was to examine cognitive appraisal of perceived threat of illness in relation to adherence to self-management behaviors in uninsured persons with type 2 diabetes.

Method(s): A convenience sample consisted of 80 subjects being treated for type 2 diabetes mellitus at a free clinic in West Virginia meeting the following inclusion criteria: age > 18 years, diagnosis of type 2 diabetes, the ability to understand English, and being uninsured. Subjects were administered the Summary of Diabetes Self Care Activities and the Cognitive Appraisal of Health Scale.

Results: Characteristics of the study sample included a mean age of 50.4 years (range 23 to 64 years), with 27.4 % men and 72.4% women. The majority of subjects were white, had diabetes for less than 10 years, and reported having one to two co-morbidities. The sample followed recommendations for taking prescribed oral medications an average of 6.6 days/week, for general diet an average of 4.1 days/week, for specific diet 3.7 days/week, and for exercise an average of 2.9 days/week. Mean HbA1c = 7.56. Significant relationships were found between cognitive appraisal variables and self-management variables. Patients perceived their diabetes as more of a challenge than as threatening or causing harm or loss.

Discussion & Conclusions: Patients had high adherence to oral medications, and less with diet and exercise recommendations. Therefore, practitioners should consider treating with medications sooner, while focusing on teaching lifestyle interventions targeting diet and
exercise. Patients appraised their diabetes as more of a challenge than as threatening or harmful to their lives, and that having diabetes was something that had to be accepted, but could be changed or acted on. These appraisals were associated with increased adherence to diet. Therefore, nurses need to be aware of the importance of appraisal of illness when discussing adherence issues with patients. These finding suggest that nurses need to help patients perceive diabetes in ways that are less threatening, and work to empower patients to face diabetes as a challenge.

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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