Who wants to join diabetes peer support groups?

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Background
● Self-management of diabetes is essential for optimising outcomes but it can be difficult to initiate and sustain.
● Peer support may assist people with diabetes to better manage their condition, and cope with the daily challenges and burdens.
● Diabetes peer support programs provide social, emotional and practical support for people with diabetes, by people with diabetes, and have been found to be associated with improved psychological, behavioral, and clinical outcomes.

Aim
● To identify and describe the characteristics of Australian adults who do not wish to join a peer support group, with the purpose of informing future service provision.

Method
● Diabetes MILES – Australia was a national survey, focused in psychological and behavioral aspects of living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes.
● The survey included validated scales and study-specific items, multiple versions were used, which all included core measures but differed in other content. Measures included in this analysis are reported below.
● A random sample of 10,000 National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) registrants with type 1 or type 2 diabetes aged 18-70 received a postal survey on online version was advertised nationally. A total of 3,135 eligible respondents took part.
● The current analysis used data from a sub-sample of participants (N=1,578) who completed items about peer support.
● Univariate analyses were used to identify demographic, behavioral and psychological variables associated with wanting to be in a peer support group.
● The following independent variables had significant univariate results and were entered into a logistic regression model, with “would like to join a support group” (yes/no) as the dependent variable.

Sample characteristics
● Mean age: 52.1±14 years
● Mean diabetes duration: 12.10 years
● 58% had type 2 diabetes (37% of whom used insulin)
● 54% were women
● 75% born in Australia
● 7% had a partner
● 30% had a university degree

Results
● Six percent (n=94) were members of a diabetes support group at the time of the survey.
● Of those who were not, 32% (n=466) were interested in joining a group and 30% (n=466) were interested in wanting to join a peer support group.
● Results of the regression analyses are displayed in Table 1.

Discussion
● Those with significant diabetes-related distress may also be difficult to engage though the fact that they find diabetes distressing may be reason enough for them to seek out peer support.
● Future research needs to explore reasons why so few Australian adults with diabetes are in support groups (including reasons for non-attendance and poor attendance), and reasons why people do not want to join a group, and to examine the utility of various models of peer support (e.g. face-to-face, telephone, online) for different target groups.

Table 1. Variables regressed on desire to join a peer support group (yes/no)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
<th>95% CI*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.12, 1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.99, 1.02</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Diabetes duration</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.18, 2.30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have a partner</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.53, 1.33</td>
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<td>Paid employment</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.95, 1.68</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Type 2 diabetes</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.53, 1.06</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diabetes duration</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.00, 1.03</td>
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<td></td>
<td>General emotional well-being</td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.99, 1.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Diabetes distress**</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.02, 1.64</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Depression</td>
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<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.95, 1.03</td>
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<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td>0.95, 1.04</td>
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<td>Diabetes self-efficacy</td>
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<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.82, 1.24</td>
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<td>Family support</td>
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<td>0.77, 1.04</td>
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<td>Family conflict</td>
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<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.97, 1.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References

Acknowledgements
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