YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DIABETES AND THEIR PEERS

Aims Peer influences can impact across a range of adolescent behaviours. Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is amongst the most common forms of chronic illness to affect young people in the UK. Self-management is crucial, but managing their T1D is often very difficult for adolescents. It has been suggested that interventions to support adolescents with T1D could usefully include friends and peers, but little is known about how peers think about and respond to T1D. This research explored T1D from the perspective of adolescent patients, friends and peers.

Methods We conducted dyadic interviews with adolescent T1D patients aged 13–15 years and a nominated close friend (N = 20). We then carried out three focus group sessions with participants without any necessary prior T1D knowledge in a secondary school setting.

Data were thematically coded and final data interpretations were subject to independent scrutiny from young people the same age as our research participants, who assessed the findings in terms of relevance and usefulness from their own perspective.

Results Limited awareness of T1D amongst their peer group generally and school teaching staff was reported by interview participants. Close friends play a valuable role in recognising the importance of T1D management whilst also accepting and normalising the condition. Considerable variations in experiences of support provided in relation to T1D in the school environment were reported by all participants, including the extent to which peers were encouraged or even permitted to support patients.

Educational materials designed in response to issues raised in the interviews were piloted in classroom settings. Realistic vignettes developed from the interviews were used to facilitate group discussion. The simple materials were well-received and positively evaluated.

Conclusions This research highlights the need for greater awareness of T1D in schools amongst teachers and peers, but encouragingly suggests that simple educational sessions can be easily implemented and are well-received. The Children and Families Act (2014) means that safe and effective care for young people with T1D must now by law be embedded in the school system. Diabetes specialist nurses should be aware of potential peer influences and may be able to usefully assist schools looking to sensitively and appropriately raise T1D awareness and facilitate optimal peer support.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS FOLLOWING A SUSPECTED ADVERSE DRUG REACTION IN A CHILD: WHO SAYS WHAT AND WHEN?

Aim To pilot a prompt guide to support discussions between clinicians and parents following a suspect adverse drug reaction in a child.