

PATIENT- AND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM-RELATED FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO NON-ADHERENCE TO DIABETES MELLITUS GUIDELINES: GENERAL PRACTITIONERS' VIEW

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BACKGROUND/AIMS: There is an increasing interest and belief that working out clinical practice guidelines (CPG) has a major impact on the quality of care. However, physicians' adherence to CPGs is often poor. The aim of this study was to assess the patient- and health care system-related factors contributing to non-adherence of diabetes mellitus CPG in Estonia.

METHODS: Descriptive postal survey using a self-administered structured questionnaire.

RESULTS: Of the 354 doctors who received the questionnaire, 46% (n=163) responded. The mean size of the patient list was 1830±407. The average number of diabetic patients in the list was 48. Of the GPs, 76% had type 2 diabetes guidelines. Low awareness of diabetes and its complications as well as patients' low motivation to change their lifestyle were considered to be the biggest difficulties in managing individual patients. Non-compliance with the medical regimen, patients' financial problems and their nonattendance were mentioned as problems by GPs. The greatest health care system-related barriers to GPs were an inadequate number of patient education materials in their practice, the lack of special diabetes education for nurses, and underfunding. The patient-related issues were regarded as problems in 96% of the cases and health care system-related factors were mentioned in 79% of the cases. Lack of patients' motivation to change their lifestyle and interest in their own health tended to be more often the problem of the GPs working in the urban areas.

CONCLUSIONS: GPs in Estonia consider patient-related factors to be key issues in non-adherence to diabetes mellitus CPG.

Key words: diabetes, guidelines, primary care