

Effective Diabetes Management Linked to Lower HbA1c for US Adults

BALTIMORE — Healthy diabetes management behaviors, such as eating fewer calories, taking insulin, and [regularly checking feet](#), are associated with lower HbA1c, according to a presenter.

In findings from six National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey cycles presented at the Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists Annual Conference, researchers found associations between key components of diabetes management and HbA1c level, revealing the importance of diabetes management as well as the work of diabetes care and education specialists, according to Cherry Myung, MS, a program staff manager at Touro University California College of Osteopathic Medicine; and Clipper Young, PharmD, MPH, CDCES, an associate professor at Touro University California College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Adults with diabetes who regularly check their feet, lower the amount of fat and calories they eat, and use insulin are more likely to have an HbA1c of less than 9%. Data were derived from Myung C, et al. P118. Presented at: ADCES22; Aug. 12-15, 2022; Baltimore.

“Each of these significant findings points to a key component in diabetes management, reinforcing that continuous large-scale public health campaigns are needed to strengthen the existing messages to patients with diabetes for effective disease management,” Myung and Young told Healio.

Myung, Young, and colleagues conducted a cross-sectional analysis of data collected from six NHANES cycles from 2007 to 2018. The analysis included 4,623 participants with diabetes and available HbA1c information who fully answered survey questions about diabetes care practices (average age, 62 years; 33.8% white, 26.9% Black, 17.4% Mexican American). Researchers analyzed associations between specific diabetes care practices and HbA1c levels.

“When we are looking at a data set at a national level, the findings we see might not be always consistent with what we see in our everyday practice,” Myung and Young said.

Participants who reported reducing their intake of fat and calories were more likely to achieve an HbA1c of less than 9% than those who did not (aOR = 2.39; 95% CI, 1.25-4.55). Respondents who took [insulin](#) were more likely to have an HbA1c of less than 9% than non-insulin users (aOR = 32.45; 95% CI, 25-42.07).

Myung and Young said future research should involve further subgroup analyses, including examining associations within different NHANES cycles to identify trends and looking at associations within demographic subgroups.

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