



# HARNESSING THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR A STRUCTURED AND INSTANT INTERVENTION, EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING IN TYPE 1 DIABETES



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### BACKGROUND

- ▶ T1DM is a disease where there is a challenge in every aspect of its management.
- ▶ Regardless of the educational status of the patients, parents or other caregivers, their questions and concerns are endless.
- ▶ Apart from the commonly repeated questions such as those on hypoglycemia, ketoacidosis, tiredness, adjustment of basal and bolus insulin-doses, diet, exercise, injection-site, mood swings, we also meet with queries regarding stem-cell therapy, pancreas transplantation, artificial pancreas etc.
- ▶ To address these, we formed a WhatsApp® group of consenting patients to provide them with instant support and allay their fears and concerns.
- ▶ The social media WhatsApp® group of T1DM patients and their caregivers (KT1DP Sweet Stars) involved our multidisciplinary diabetes-care team actively responding to the queries posted.
- ▶ Considering the repetitive nature of the queries, questions on fake health messages from the internet, we custom created short videos.
- ▶ We always make it a point that those who appear in the videos are those faces that are familiar to the patients.
- ▶ Whereas, whenever there is an emergency, one of the team members will instantly communicate to resolve the concern.

### CONCLUSIONS

Social media-based educational and peer-support groups formed under the supervision of a multidisciplinary diabetes care team for the benefit of T1DM patients can aid in structured as well as instant education as part of the treatment and counselling.

### REFERENCES

- Cooper A, Kar P. A new dawn: the role of social media in diabetes education. *J Diabetes Nurs*. 2014;18(2):68-71.
- Lee R, Whitley H. Use of social media to support patients with diabetes mellitus. *The Consultant Pharmacist*®. 2014;29(1):53-7.

### AIM

A brief and confidential online survey was conducted to understand the advantages recounted by the patients/caregivers in the KT1DP Sweet Stars group, with regard to being a part of such interactive, educational groups.

### RESULTS

T1DM patients: n=166, 73% males. Majority recounted multiple advantages of being members of the group, sharing common concerns.

#### MERITS OF FORMING SOCIAL MEDIA GROUPS FOR T1DM MANAGEMENT

AS RECOUNTED BY THE PATIENTS/CAREGIVERS	% POSITIVE RESPONDERS
The interactions possible through the T1DM group have helped boost the confidence in managing the disease	90.36
Appreciated the usefulness of educational/ awareness videos shared through the group	93.37
Experienced reduction in the hypoglycemic episodes, number of hospital visits etc.	69.88
Felt that our diabetes care team, as well as other members in the group, are always available to respond to the concerns	90.36
Felt that the T1DM group has helped gain knowledge and confidence regarding:	
Better awareness of the disease	96.38
Management of Hypoglycemia	87.34
Management of Lifestyle	90.36
Insulin injection techniques	80.72
Glucose monitoring	91.57
Overcoming mood swings	79.87

#### AS IDENTIFIED BY OUR T1DM CARE TEAM

- ▶ Highly cost-effective since the patients and caregivers can be in their own environment, need not travel and no work days are lost.
- ▶ Group educational sessions are very much effective since a question arising from one member may benefit others.
- ▶ Most of the educational and awareness messages available on the internet are mixed with fiction, keeping the audience confused. Patients and parents are familiar with the faces and/or voices appearing in the video and audio messages posted by us, which boosts their confidence.
- ▶ Each group member can be a role model where they can extend real-time guidance and support to the lesser experienced persons in terms of managing a difficulty (e.g. a hypoglycemic episode).
- ▶ In India, until recently, type 1 patients/parents were reluctant to disclose the disease. Social media platforms have contributed to the creation of platforms promising better long-term outcomes and improved longevity.