

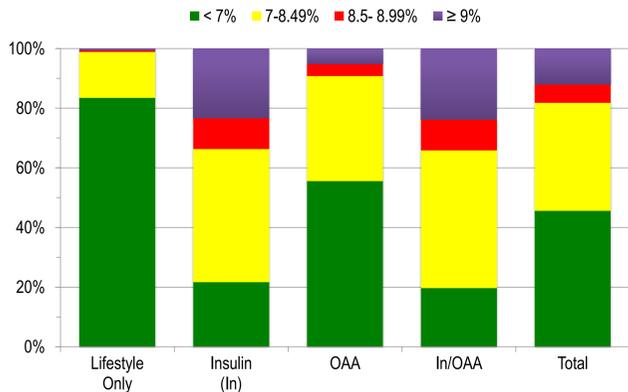
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 Website: <http://diabetescare.nshealth.ca/>



**BACKGROUND**

When patients using insulin therapy are compared to patients managing their diabetes with non-insulin therapies (oral agents [OAA]/injectables) or lifestyle only, people using insulin (In) therapy have more difficulty achieving glycemic targets.

**FIGURE 1: A1C BY DIABETES TREATMENT CATEGORY**  
 (N = 10,432)



Source: DCPNS Registry, 2013 (Quality Indicator Report)

**PURPOSE**

- To guide provincial work related to improved diabetes management, a survey was designed to determine if/how Diabetes Educators in Nova Scotia are teaching patients how to self-adjust insulin, when to adjust insulin, and what helps/hinders patient self-adjustment of insulin.
- We also sought to determine if there was a need for/interest in a more standardized approach to the development of supporting tools for insulin initiation and self-adjustment.

**METHODS**

- Diabetes Educators from 38 Diabetes Centres across Nova Scotia were surveyed. Questions included:
  - Years of service in current position.
  - Present practices related to self-adjustment of insulin (in person and/or by phone)
  - Perceived barriers/enablers to patient self-adjustment of insulin



**CONCLUSION**

- A small working group has been formed and is moving forward with the development of a more standardized approach to patient assessment for insulin initiation and self-adjustment. This approach includes:
  - An assessment of cognition, using simple validated tools
  - Management of the fear of hypoglycemia
  - An assessment of motivation and confidence

**RESULTS**

- 37 out of 110 Diabetes Educators (33% response rate) completed a survey (22 Registered Nurses and 15 Dietitians).
- 86% of Diabetes Educators reported that they teach patients to self-adjust insulin, while only 26% thought their patients actually adjust. Under 45% of Educators use tools to support this practice with 46% reporting a defined approach to teaching self-adjustment. When asked about a standardized approach, 85% of Educators would find this beneficial.

**FIGURE 2. SELECT SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

SAMPLE OF SURVEY QUESTIONS	YES N (%)	NO N (%)
1. Do you currently adjust insulin for your patients (by phone and/or in person)?	30 (86%)	5 (14%)
2. Do you teach your patients how to self-adjust their insulin doses?	30 (86%)	5 (14%)
3. Do your patients self-adjust their insulin dose?	10 (26%)	Some 28 (74%)
6. Do you currently use tools or instruments that you have adapted for patient self-adjustment of insulin?	14 (42%)	19 (58%)
8. Within your practice do you have a defined approach to teaching patient self-adjustment of insulin?	17 (46%)	20 (54%)
9. Do you offer patient education groups for insulin dose adjustment?	14 (39%)	22 (61%)
14. Would it be beneficial to have a standardized approach?	29 (85%)	5 (15%)
15. Would you be interested in working on a provincial approach to patient self-adjustment of insulin and/or the development of the supporting tools?	18 (53%)	16 (47%)

**FIGURE 3: REPORTED TRAITS THAT HINDER AND HELP (ALLOW) PATIENT SELF-ADJUSTMENT OF INSULIN:**

TRAITS THAT...HINDER... (N)	TRAITS THAT...HELP (ALLOW)... (N)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor cognition (10)</li> <li>Lack of confidence, motivation, unwilling (10)</li> <li>Fear of hypoglycemia (6)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivated, willing (5)</li> <li>Basic knowledge (6)</li> <li>Confidence (4)</li> </ul>

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**PROVINCIAL PROGRAM BACKGROUND** ([www.diabetescareprogram.ns.ca](http://www.diabetescareprogram.ns.ca))

Established in 1991, the Diabetes Care Program of Nova Scotia (DCPNS) is one of nine Provincial Programs funded by the Nova Scotia (NS) Department of Health & Wellness. Guided by an Advisory Council, several working groups and committees, and the equivalent of 7 full-time positions, the DCPNS:

- Advises on service delivery models
- Establishes and monitors adherence to DM guidelines
- Provides support, services, and resources to DM healthcare providers (including 39 Diabetes Centres)
- Collects, analyzes, and distributes DM data for NS

DCPNS mission: To improve, through leadership and partnerships, the health of Nova Scotians living with, affected by, or at risk of developing diabetes



IDF 23<sup>rd</sup> World Diabetes Congress  
 Vancouver, November 30 – December 4, 2015