

REAL TRANSITION: A YOUNG PEOPLE-LED RESEARCH PROJECT TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE AT 'TRANSITION' CLINICS

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INTRODUCTION: Transition from paediatric to adult care is recognised as a major problem in type 1 diabetes care.^{1 2} Reality Check, an organisation of young adults with diabetes, in recognition of the importance of transition, was successful in attracting funds for a 12-month project to research and implement a number of initiatives at a major teaching hospitals diabetes 'transition' clinic. The attendance rates at this clinic were amongst the lowest of any service at the hospital in 2003. **AIM:** The overall aim of the project is to increase attendance rates. In addition, the project is investigating how the clinic environment can be used to increase the information-seeking skills of young people at this crucial stage of their development. **METHOD:** A confidential and anonymous survey is distributed and interviews conducted at every clinic. A Reference Group comprising health professionals and two young people who attend the clinic, and two young people who had dropped out of the medical system, analyse the results and determine interventions to address the key findings which are being subsequently introduced at 3 months and 6 months. A Diabetes Educator is employed by the project and is meeting with young people to determine their knowledge status and teach them information-seeking skills. **RESULTS:** 68% of attendees (mean age 22, range 18-37), 55% male, have so far completed the survey. 34 of the 102 people surveyed (33%) reported previously missing an appointment because they forgot about it. Personalised SMS reminders sent to mobile phones have been introduced. 54% requested diabetes books and magazines to read whilst waiting. A mini-library of diabetes books is now taken to the clinic and the young people have access to a photocopier. 54% requested Free Parking. A Welcome Sheet introducing the clinic and containing transport advice is provided to all attendees and to the local paediatric hospital. **CONCLUSION:** It is hoped that the issues and initiatives flowing from this project will be captured in a form which will assist all diabetes centres in developing programs for young adults with diabetes.

This project was funded under a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

(1) National Needs Assessment of Children and Adolescents with Diabetes, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation Australia, Sydney, 1999.

(2) Dunning PL, Educating the adolescent about diabetes in Diabetes and the Adolescent, Werther G. & Court J., Eds., Miranova, Melbourne, 1998.