DIABETES MELLITUS - CAN HEALTH CARE BURDEN BE REDUCED BY NEW FOLLOW UP FORMS

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Background: Diabetes mellitus is one of the fastest growing health care problems, especially in the developing countries. It is projected that there would be 635 mil people with diabetes by 2035. The disease is chronic and progressive. The treatment an follow up require a multidisciplinary team and a continuous effort from the healthcare team but also from the patient. Modern treatment of chronic disease sets the patient and his experience of wellbeing in focus. The development of new medicines and integration of technology and artificial intelligence in diabetes care gives new challenges to the patient and health care team, but also new possibilities. The last COVID pandemics has also confirmed the efficacy of digital consultations.

Methods: We give a short description presentation of patient managed outpatient clinic.

The number of outpatient clinics in Norway (neurology, rheumatology, diabetes) have now started to use patient managed outpatient clinics. Chronic patients that are followed up at the clinic (every 3/6/12 month) are included in the patient register. Instead of getting an physical appointment, the patients get first a questionnaire formed by the specialist health care team (symptoms, medication use, wellbeing etc). The questionnaire is sent back digitally. The specialist nurse than goes through the answers. The answers at coded in traffic light color. Depending on the score, it is possible to time the appointment and choose the type of appointment (physical, digital) or postpone the appointment: The patient has also the possibility to refer to the healthcare team when there is a need for consultation.

Results: There is not systemic statistic for the effect of patient managed outpatient clinics. Preliminary local results, however, show that up to 70% of planned consultations can be modified. The new outpatient clinic is very well accepted from the patents- with preliminary high response to the questionnaire and satisfaction with the possibility of digital consultations.

Conclusion: Patient managed diabetes outpatient clinics are a promising improvement in diabetes care. It responds better to patient needs. It reduces the burden on diabetes healthcare team. It helps the team to better prioritize the task. It probably reduces the economic burden of diabetes follow up, though that is not so easy to confirm due to the costs of modern medicines and diabetes technology that is being part of the treatment. The patient managed outpatient clinic can be of help in the developing healthcare systems and can be engaged in the prevention of diabetes

Keywords: diabetes, patient managed outpatient clinic