

Medical research to improve quality of life for diabetes patients

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University of Birmingham scientists are carrying out pioneering research which aims to improve care for diabetes patients in south Birmingham where more than 14% of all deaths are related to the condition. Consultants are working with people diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes to evaluate education and support packages and discover better ways of reaching the community's diverse social and ethnic groups.

The study will measure the benefits for those taking part, determine why others are not taking up the care on offer and identify how barriers can be overcome to improve patients' quality of life.

Dr Parth Narendran, Diabetes Consultant at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, said: "In South Birmingham more than 4% of the population has diabetes and more than 14% of deaths can be attributed to diabetes. This is one of the highest figures in the UK and reflects our high ethnic mix and social deprivation.

"We need to assess whether the education available to patients is helpful and whether it is delivered within the right structure.

"In particular we will be looking at the uptake by ethnic minorities who are traditionally very hard to reach. Many South Asian families have members with Type 2 diabetes and their close relatives are more likely to develop it. We need to explore ways in which we can reach out to educate and manage their disease."

The two-year project is one of nine research themes being explored under an NIHR initiative called Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) for Birmingham and the Black Country. The research study will work with GP practices targeting areas with a high South Asian population.

The findings will be shared with another eight CLAHRCs being piloted across the UK and any complementary research will be shared to greater understand obstacles and delivery of support throughout the NHS nationally.

NHS South Birmingham currently commissions the Diabetes Education and Self Management for Ongoing and Newly Diagnosed (DESMOND) programme for patients with Type 2 diabetes. Patients have a choice of two DESMOND programmes to participate in; Foundation or BME specific.

Dr Narendran explained: "We will be evaluating DESMOND to give us before and after results. We will evaluate the programme, measure its uptake and effects on diet and exercise, look at attendance for necessary check-ups and the glucose control achieved.

"We need to determine ways of improving how our patients manage chronic diseases and ultimately improve their quality of life."

Type 2 Diabetes currently affects around five per cent of the population in the UK. Recently announced government plans for a national screening programme are likely to result in the identification of even more patients. Currently, a major proportion of patients with Type 2 diabetes do not find out they have the disease until they suffer a related condition, such as heart, circulatory or neurological problems.

Latest figures from the charity Diabetes UK, calculated by combining research evidence, diabetes prevalence estimates and population and mortality data, show that diabetes is responsible for 11.6% of deaths among 20 to 79-year-olds in England.

People of South Asian, African, African-Caribbean and Middle Eastern descent are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes. Those with an African-Caribbean or South Asian background who live in the UK are at least five times more likely to have diabetes than the white population. People of African-Caribbean or South Asian origin are also more likely to develop complications of diabetes such as heart disease at a younger age than the rest of the population.

Further Media Information: Please contact Anna Mitchell in the University Press Office on 0121 414 6029

Notes to the editor

1. The NIHR Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) for Birmingham & Black Country is one of nine pilot CLAHRCs funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). CLAHRCs were established in October 2008 with up to £10 million funding over five years to undertake high-quality applied health research focused on the needs of patients and to support the translation of research evidence into practice in the NHS.
2. The CLAHRC for Birmingham and the Black Country (BBC) covers all the Birmingham Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and extends into the area covered by two of the four Black Country PCTs. University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust is the lead NHS organisation and the University of Birmingham is the academic partner.
3. The CLAHRC BBC Theme 8 is: Implementation of effective community care for diabetes and is concerned specifically with Type 2 diabetes, which currently affects 2.3 million people in England and Wales.
4. The DESMOND education course is mainly delivered in primary care in the UK, as part of the service offered by local primary care trusts. The programme has been designed to meet the standards outlined in national policy, for example, the Diabetes National Service Framework (NSF), and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).
5. The DESMOND programme currently being provided in England is made up of 6 hours of group sessions delivered in the community to a maximum of 10 people newly diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes.
6. The CLAHRC for Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland (LNR) is sharing the results of its randomised controlled trial of the DESMOND programme (run through The University Hospitals of Leicester) with the CLAHRC BBC.
- 7: Visit the CLAHRC BBC website at: www.clahrc-bbc.nihr.ac.uk (<http://www.clahrc-bbc.nihr.ac.uk>)