



# Good "Practice"

A Newsletter from the Lakeside Medical Practice

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## Structured Education -Type 2 Diabetes X-Pert



**Jackie Hall**  
Diabetes Practice Nurse

Our practice population has a large number of type 2 diabetics that have received no formal education and support in the long term management of their disease. Whilst our clinic times are used constructively, like many practices they are restricted in time allowance of 20 minutes. This means that very little if any, effective education can be delivered to patients in how to manage their diabetes in regards to coming to terms with their diagnosis, lifestyle, diet, exercise, long term complications and support for partners and carers living with someone who has diabetes. This has been a major concern for the diabetes team at Lakeside and as we have seen our population grow over the years and especially the diagnosis of type 2 diabetes amongst our black Afro Caribbean population.

Whilst all the diabetes team are enthusiastic and experienced in delivering effective management, we have felt for a long time that the patients would benefit from more of a structured type of education whereby they had the opportunity to share their concerns with other patients with the same disease, and to have more dedicated time in dealing with issues that they are not normally given the opportunity to discuss during a clinic appointment.

We have been aware that structured education has been available for type 1 patients (DAFNE) at Queen Mary's hospital which has had an enormous effect on our patient's long term management and that other programmes are available for type 2 patients.

X-pert structured education has been available in Bexley for a few years but the times and venues have not always been suitable for the majority of our patients in Thamesmead.

As one of the practice nurses at Lakeside Health Centre who is very enthusiastic about diabetes and the care and management of our patients, I was given the opportunity in Dec 2009 to train to become an X-pert educator and to be able to deliver structured education to our patients.

With the support of the Care Trust and the practice I have been able to secure a suitable venue within our own building on a regular basis that patients are able to attend without having to travel too far.

Since March 2010 I have been delivering the 5 week X-pert education programme together with support from another X-pert educator. It has been well attended and on many occasions with spouses and other family members in attendance.

Sessions include **"What is diabetes"**, medicines management, lifestyle issues- exercise, diet- portion sizes, carbohydrate awareness, food labelling, short and long term complications, foot care, goal setting and understanding blood test results.

Teaching methods include group interactions, formal teaching, DVD's, patient participation, group discussions and Patient Information Leaflets including the X-pert book. Patients are encouraged to ask questions and these are normally dealt with within the session or at least by the end of the course.

Lakeside Medical Practice

Telephone: 08444 778966

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Patients that attend all give positive feedback when the course is completed and evaluation questionnaires are sent to Bexley Care Trust Diabetes Development Team. Patients are encouraged to join the local Diabetes UK patient support group in which regular meetings and newsletters are sent to members and application forms are handed out at the end of the course.

Patients become very empowered about their disease and clinic appointments are more effective in that patients understand not only how to manage their disease more effectively but are able to make better choices and decisions about their long term management. Compliance/concordance of medication has improved and patients are able to recognise when their diabetes is progressing and that more intensive management is needed.

I have also been given the opportunity to educate all the diabetes team within our practice and all that are involved in the care of our diabetic patients have attended the X-pert programme. This ensures that our team is aware of what is taught and are therefore able give the same information to our patients. All team members are happy to discuss X-pert and referrals to the next available course are made. The diabetes team meet regularly to discuss issues, patients and concerns and regularly attend update sessions to ensure that our clinical practice is maintained and all local and national guidelines are adhered to.

It has been one of the most satisfying aspects of my work in the care and management of the type 2 diabetic and as you can see from the following data very effective.

Data analysis shows that after attending the course the average Hba1c recording in the group does dramatically reduce over a three month period. This is reflected in the enthusiasm and empowerment and motivation of the patients to undertake the skills and knowledge that they have leant from the course. Even after 6 months the Hba1c average shows that minimal deterioration has occurred and in some cases improvements shown. Patients are more motivated to attend clinic appointments and are able to understand the meaning of their results and actively seek to attend consultations for medication titration.

Results of average HbA1c after a year of attending show that even though the average mean has reduced there are fluctuations of both improvement and some deterioration, this clearly indicates that perhaps motivation has somewhat waned and perhaps the introduction of a yearly follow up course could be introduced. It is evident that long term improvement of HbA1c does reduce the risk of co-morbidities and by

supporting and encouraging patients to achieve this is important. Our practice have actively encouraged this and by the involvement of the Year of Care programme aim to actively improve and work with a patient centred approach to diabetes care in the future and to reduce co-morbidities.

Together with X-pert education, the diabetes team at Lakeside and the support of the care trust, the long term future of care of the diabetic patient within our practice looks encouraging and aims to reduce the long term complications of poorly controlled diabetes.

Our approach to our patients has been to pro active and enabled us to develop good relationships with our patients to help and support both them and their family members.

Jackie Hall  
Diabetes Practice Nurse.  
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