Background & Purpose

- People with type-2 diabetes (T2D) provide 99% of their own care.1
- High frequency interaction improves self-management.2
- The purpose of the project was to: Determine how a CME promotes and/or inhibits social interactions among peers.

Search Methods

MeSH terms & keywords in 3 subject/content areas searched:
- Social interaction, social support, peer support. AND
- CME (m-health, Internet, virtual reality, telephone). AND
- Chronic disease OR diabetes.

Inclusion Criteria:
- Group peer-to-peer interaction.
- All interaction via Internet.
- Adults (> 18 years of age) with T2D.

Results

Main Findings

6 influencers of peer-to-peer interaction in a CME emerged:
- Characteristic
  - Synchronous and asynchronous channels influence how social interaction occurs.
- Choice
  - Individuals control their: (1) rate, amount, and duration of interaction; & (2) time and location of participation.
- Feedback
  - Individuals can ask questions which increases the personal relevance of information.
- Personalized
  - Personalized support from peers supplements formal information from providers.
- Exchange
  - CMEs enable the exchange of support among peers.
- Mediator
  - A person who encourages & facilitates social interaction among peers.

Operationalized Descriptions of Channels Employed in CMEs

Forum
- Discussion board.
- Participants interact with each other by posting asynchronous messages in different subject areas.

Text Chat
- Instant messaging.
- A synchronous or asynchronous text conversation.

Videoconferencing
- Video-messaging or chat.
- Participants synchronously interact with others via their personal computer and share what is on their screen and see other participants in real-time.

E-mail
- List-serv messages.
- A text based message from a sender to a recipient through a software environment.

Key Conclusions

- Casual, intimate conversations with peers on sensitive topics is important.
- High and low users of the CMEs obtain and benefit from information and feedback.
- Individuals extend their peer network by participating in interventions via CMEs.

Implications & Future Research

- Knowledge of the channel which participants find beneficial in peer-to-peer interaction must be identified.
- Understanding social interaction in CMEs allows for development of interventions to increase self-management behaviors of persons living with T2D.
- Persons living with T2D communicate and interact with peers to obtain relevant, situation specific information and knowledge about managing their own care.

Selected References