

Integrative Health Coaching for Patients with Type 2 Diabetes

A Randomized Clinical Trial

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Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of integrative health (IH) coaching on psychosocial factors, behavior change, and glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes.

Methods

Fifty-six patients with type 2 diabetes were randomized to either 6 months of IH coaching or usual care (control group). Coaching was conducted by telephone for fourteen 30-minute sessions. Patients were guided in creating an individualized vision of health, and goals were self-chosen to align with personal values. The coaching agenda, discussion topics, and goals were those of the patient, not the provider. Preintervention and postintervention assessments measured medication adherence, exercise frequency, patient engagement, psychosocial variables, and A1C.

Results

Perceived barriers to medication adherence decreased, while patient activation, perceived social support, and benefit finding all increased in the IH coaching group compared with those in the control group. Improvements in the coaching group alone were also observed for self-reported adherence, exercise frequency, stress, and perceived health status. Coaching participants with elevated baseline A1C ($\geq 7\%$) significantly reduced their A1C.

Conclusions

A coaching intervention focused on patients' values and sense of purpose may provide added benefit to traditional diabetes education programs. Fundamentals of IH coaching may be applied by diabetes educators to improve patient self-efficacy, accountability, and clinical outcomes.

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