Title:
What's Working in Pediatric Type 1 Diabetes Provider-Family Relationships?

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Objective: The goal of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s “Triple Aim” framework is to enhance the patient healthcare experience, improve health outcomes, and reduce costs. Patient satisfaction is central to the healthcare experience, and understanding families’ positive experiences with their children’s providers may help identify ways to increase satisfaction. This study aimed to explore parents’ perspectives around what they like about their child’s type 1 diabetes (T1D) care provider/team.

Methods: As part of a larger qualitative study on diabetes health-related quality of life, 23 parents (96% mothers) of youth with T1D (age 5-17 years, M age= 10.9±3.8 years; 35% female) completed semi-structured interviews about their experiences parenting a child with T1D, including about their child’s diabetes care team. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, coded using NVivo software, and interpreted using content analysis to identify themes.

Results: Parents described high satisfaction in general with their child’s diabetes team, and three themes emerged related to positive provider characteristics. (1) Parents expressed feeling satisfied with providers’ knowledge and expertise about diabetes management, such as innovative treatment recommendations to optimize glycemic control. (2) Parents described appreciating when providers had helpful attitudes, including taking time to explain information clearly and in lay terms and using a nonjudgmental demeanor that made families comfortable to discuss struggles of diabetes management. (3) Many parents discussed being thankful for having easy access to providers, like being able to efficiently contact team members for help and receiving quick responses, especially for medical emergencies late in the evening.

Conclusions: Identifying contributors to family satisfaction can help healthcare systems focus on aspects of provider-family relationships that enhance the healthcare experience. As liaisons to medical teams, pediatric psychologists are well-positioned to advocate for patient/family preferences. Integrated psychologists may have opportunities to train providers in effective, supportive communication strategies and model patient-centered/nonjudgmental approaches to care.