The role of alexithymia factors in glucose control of children with type 1 diabetes

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1. BACKGROUND

DIABETES : metabolic affection characterized by chronic hyperglycemia. Type 1 patients (IDDM) need supplies of exogenous insulin to survive.

Glucose control : a major key of the diabetes treatment is to maintain glucose control in order to avoid serious complications. Measurement of hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) is used as an objective measure of long-term blood glucose control. The amount of this blood marker reflects the sugar average rate in blood for a two months period. The closer your HbA1c is to normal (6.2%), the less risk you have for complications.

2. PURPOSE

Examine the respective contribution of:
- sociodemographic variables
- medical variables (diabetes duration, glycaemic measures)
- psychological variable (alexithymia)

on child’s glucose control prediction (HbA1c).

3. METHOD

What explains glucose control :
- Demographic variables (marital status & parental education) (18%, p < .01), as well as
- Medical variables (diabetes duration & N. glycaemic measures per day) (17.7%; p < .01), predicted HbA1c
- DDF factor (alexithymia) was found to be an additional predictor of HbA1c (p < .01), over and above them. It explains an additional 11.5 % of the total variance.

4. RESULTS

5. DISCUSSION

- Replication of results already obtained in a IDDM adult population (Luminet & Al, 2006)
- Children having difficulties to describe verbally their feelings are also those which have the worst glucose control
- Emotional competences seems to be important for diabetes management
- Future research: Design specific therapeutic interventions for children lacking of emotional regulation abilities: helping them to develop their emotional competences should contribute to achieve the medical objective of glucose control