Background

- Students with diabetes face not only day-to-day disease management but also psychosocial challenges and isolation from peers.
- District nurses in two large districts in Colorado identified a need to provide support for students and parents in a group setting.
- Three diabetes support events have been hosted in various formats and settings thus far with plans to continue with such events indefinitely.

Methods

- Literature search was conducted to look at the efficacy of diabetes support groups.
- Outreach was made to a social worker team at a prominent diabetes center in Colorado.
- Collaboration was conducted with a fellow district that sponsored a similar event.
- Paper invitations were sent and followed up with phone calls and e-mails to encourage attendance.
- Events all started with ice breaker activities, followed by break-out sessions and interactive games by age and/or parent/student panels.

Results

- Diabetes Event Attendance:
  1. 11 elementary and 2 secondary school-aged school students at a central location in the evening
  2. 6 high school students at their home school during school hours
  3. 5 elementary student, their families and 1 high school student in the evening

- How often would you like to see these support events held?
  - Weekly
  - Monthly
  - Quarterly
  - 1 time per semester

- On a scale from 1-10 with 10 being the highest, how much did your child enjoy the event? = 8.8

Conclusions

- Development of diabetes support events in the school setting are not only feasible but welcomed by parents and students.
- Middle school and high school students are more receptive to such events if held during school hours. They are not as likely to participate in the evening.
- A mentorship program wherein an older student with diabetes is paired with a younger one might be of additional benefit for both parties.

Implications

- Students and parents have overwhelmingly indicated that they like these support events and want them to continue.
- Because this program is still in its infancy, it is too early to tell if the support being provided will alter or improve students’ behavior and coping skills.

References


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