

Real-World Application of CGM Technology to Improve Diabetes Management in Primary Care



HOW TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR PATIENT

Understanding a patient's reaction to diagnosis

Patients may feel overwhelmed, helpless, and anxious upon receiving a new diagnosis, despite having previously faced other serious illnesses.

What do you need to do when evaluating a newly diagnosed patient?

- Ask patients to share with you what a diagnosis of diabetes means to them.
- Remind patients that having a diagnosis of diabetes doesn't have to limit what they can do; however, it may need to be done differently or with additional planning.
- Explain to people living with diabetes that although they can have serious consequences if glucose is uncontrolled, these can absolutely be prevented with proper monitoring, lifestyle changes, and medications.

Ways to address a patient's continued reaction to diabetes diagnosis

- Providing a certified diabetes care and education specialist (CDCES) can offer significant support and can improve a patient's belief in their own ability to manage their diabetes.^{1,2}
- Evaluate a patient's need for diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) annually, as well as at diagnosis, when not meeting treatment goals, when complicating factors develop (medical, physical, and psychosocial), and when transitions in life and care occur.³

Addressing a patient's challenges or barriers to utilizing a CGM

Patients may feel apprehensive about wearing a CGM due to discomfort with wearing a device, concerns about its impact on their sleep, the constant awareness of its presence, anxiety about continuously monitoring their body's status, and many other reasons.

What do you need to do when managing a patient with these barriers?

- Ask the patient to wear a CGM once to see how their perceptions change. Often, they will admit that it is much less noticeable than they had predicted.
- Show them how the alerts and alarms can be customized to prevent undue disturbances to sleep or lifestyle while still offering helpful reminders and protection from hypoglycemia.
- Demonstrate how the placement of the device can be optimized for comfort by choosing site location and using overlay tapes if needed to maintain skin adhesion.

Ways to address continued barriers to CGM use in your practice

- Evidence supports behavioral strategies and multicomponent interventions, such as motivational interviewing, patient activation, goal setting and action planning, problem-solving, tracking or self-monitoring, and facilitating opportunities for social support.³⁻⁵

Overcoming difficulties in interpreting CGM data or staying compliant with monitoring

Patients may struggle to understand glucose trends or integrate CGM data into daily life, leading to poor decision-making and an inability to adjust diet, exercise, and medication.

What do you need to do when evaluating a patient who has trouble with CGM data?

- Let the patient know that it is normal for glucose readings to vary throughout the day and after meals; CGM gives us a clearer picture and a way to quantify these variations.
- Explain that CGM reports are not like report cards that are “good” or “bad.” They are a helpful tool that can quickly demonstrate where to focus our attention so that we can make the most efficient and effective changes.
- Explain how CGM readings are used in two distinct but complimentary ways: to make real-time decisions quickly, but also to thoughtfully reflect on trends over time. By collecting all of the data, the healthcare team will be able to do the best job to assist in seeing these patterns.

Ways to address a patient’s continued difficulty understanding and implementing CGM data

- Reflect on the patient’s CGM goals, set glucose targets, make plans for responding to readings, and decide with whom the patient wants to share data.³

KEY MESSAGE

• Engage and support patients:

- Understand patients’ emotional reactions to diabetes diagnosis and their perceptions about using CGM devices.
- Provide reassurance, continuous education, and support through a CDCES.
- Encourage trial use of CGMs, customize alerts, and optimize device placement for comfort.

• Facilitate CGM data utilization:

- Provide comprehensive education on the variability of glucose readings and the utility of CGM data for informed decision-making.
- Provide ongoing support through structured training sessions, regular follow-ups, simplified presentation, employment of diabetes educators, implementation of DSMES programs, and use of patient-centered techniques, such as motivational interviewing and shared decision-making.

References

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