

Abstract: Assessing the Value of Diabetes Education

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of diabetes self-management education/training (DSME/T) on financial outcomes (cost of patient care).

Methods

Commercial and Medicare claims payer-derived datasets were used to assess whether patients who participate in diabetes education are more likely to follow recommendations for care than similar patients who do not participate in diabetes education, and if claims of patients who participate in diabetes education are lower than those of similar patients who do not.

Results

Patients using diabetes education have lower average costs than patients who do not use diabetes education. Physicians exhibit high variation in their referral rates to diabetes education.

Conclusions

The collaboration between diabetes educators and physicians yields positive clinical quality and cost savings. The analysis indicates that quality can be improved, and cost reduced, by increasing referral rates to diabetes education among low-referring physicians, specifically among men and people in disadvantaged areas. More needs to be done to inform physicians about ways to increase access to diabetes education for underserved populations.