

Health Promotion Plan for Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes in Australia

Introduction

Type 2 diabetes is a severe epidemic in Australia and other parts of the world that has affected many people's quality of lives. The most interesting part, however, is that it is not very difficult to prevent and manage type 2 diabetes as it is intricately linked with lifestyle factors such as diet and physical activity along with a hereditary component. Therefore, by implementing lifestyle modifications before the onset of diabetes, the diagnosis of this condition can be effectively prevented or delayed (Al-Saeed et al., 2016). This paper presents a health promotion project plan for raising awareness and educating those people who have a family history of diabetes. By doing so, people who are genetically susceptible to type 2 diabetes will be able to modify environmental influences in order to prevent the diagnosis of diabetes or ensure that the severity of the condition is significantly reduced.

Target Community

Type 2 diabetes is a genetic disorder that mostly occurs in adults who are 40 years or older; however, in recent times, it has been diagnosed in adolescents and young adults as well. People with a family history of type 2 diabetes are more prone to developing this condition during their lifetime. Despite having a strong hereditary component, the influence of environmental and lifestyle factors is also significant in the development of type 2 diabetes (Ali, 2015). Therefore, the target community for health promotion for type 2 diabetes will be people in the age group of 15 to 40 years, both male and female, who have a family history of type 2 diabetes. The rationale for this is that if people who have a strong susceptibility to developing type 2 diabetes modify their lifestyle before the onset of the condition, they may be able to delay and/or prevent the development of diabetes.

Reason for Choosing this Target Community

The prevalence of type 2 diabetes in Australia has significantly increased over the past decade and the Australian Health Survey (AHS) conducted in 2012 found that around 4.2% of

adults over the age of 18 years were diagnosed with type 2 diabetes (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). However, data from surveys conducted in the subsequent years have shown that this number may be closer to 5.0% considering younger age groups, inaccessible populations, and inadequate reporting in Australia. In terms of actual numbers, this percentage amounts to 1.1 million Australians who are currently diagnosed with type 2 diabetes (Davis et al., 2018). According to the Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool (AUSDRISK) developed by Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, the risk of a person acquiring type 2 diabetes with a family history of this condition is three times higher as compared to a person without a family history of diabetes (Department of Health and Ageing, 2010).

Providing education and awareness to this target community might potentially bring down the numbers of people who are susceptible to developing this condition at a later age. Type 2 diabetes is largely influenced by lifestyle factors and therefore, early adoption of a healthy diet and regular exercise can lower the risk and/or severity of diabetes in people who have a family history of the condition. People in this group who are diagnosed with pre-diabetes can also take appropriate medication, which can help them reduce the risk of developing diabetes by 60% and save a lifetime amount of \$1087 (Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, 2012).

Aims and Objectives of the Health Promotion Project

The primary aim of this health promotion project is to spread awareness about people's risk of developing type 2 diabetes especially if they have a family history of the condition. If people in the target community are made aware of their increased risk and offered strategies to reduce this risk, the overall prevalence of the disease can decrease thereby decreasing the financial burden of diabetes in the nation.

The objectives of the health promotion project are as follows:

- To reduce the prevalence and financial burden of type 2 diabetes in Australia by making susceptible individuals aware of their risk and implementing strategies to reduce this risk

- To conduct health promotion programmes for people with a family history of type 2 diabetes and provide them with information about a healthy diet and exercise regime
- To perform diabetes testing on people with a family history of diabetes, identify individuals who have pre-diabetes or diabetes, and start them on appropriate medication so that the severity of the condition can be reduced

Classification as per Health Promotion Management Perspectives

In general, health promotion and management actions are classified as primary, secondary, and tertiary depending on the stage of the disease in which the health plan is implemented. Primary preventive measures include those that aim to prevent the onset of a disease in a healthy population. Secondary measures are those that aim to detect a condition at its early stages and immediately implement protective actions to limit progression of the disease. Tertiary measures help people manage their condition by modifying lifestyle factors and/or changing treatment strategies (Fleming and Parker, 2015).

The type 2 diabetes health promotion project plan falls under both primary and secondary preventive measures. At the primary level, it aims to identify individuals in the age group of 15 to 40 years with a family history of type 2 diabetes and make them aware of their risk so that they may take appropriate preventive measures to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes. At the secondary level, it aims to invite participants in the mentioned age range to take a diabetes test and check for a possible diagnosis of pre-diabetes or early-stage diabetes. If this is detected, the individuals may immediately modify their lifestyle and start taking medications to prevent the disease from exacerbating beyond control.

Stakeholders for the Health Promotion Project

For this project, the most important stakeholders are the individuals with a family history of type 2 diabetes as they stand a chance to delay or prevent a diagnosis of this condition saving themselves a significant amount of money and living a healthy diabetes-free life. Additionally, by implementing a healthy diet and regular exercise in their daily routine to prevent the onset of diabetes, these individuals also acquire protection against other chronic

conditions such as hypertension and cardiovascular diseases making this a win-win opportunity for them. Apart from vulnerable individuals, the other stakeholders include healthcare providers and diabetologists who cater to the healthcare requirements of diabetics and their families on a daily basis. This health promotion project will make patients more open to treatment options and lifestyle modification to protect themselves and their families from further damage due to diabetes (Kwan et al., 2017).

At the community level, the stakeholders for the health promotion project are non-profit organizations, health workers, diabetes educators, and diabetes-specific organizations such as the Australian Diabetes Society, Australian Diabetes Educators Association, Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, and different state and territory diabetes organizations. Finally, the Australian government is also a stakeholder for this health promotion project as a decrease in the prevalence of diabetes will reduce the financial burden of the disease in the nation (Department of Health, 2020).

Specific Health Message for Target Community

Given that the target community includes those people with a family history of type 2 diabetes, a specific health message that would be appropriate to make them aware of their risks and take preventive measures would be:

“Learn from your parents’ mistakes! You WILL live long enough to get all the diseases your parents have!”

This message will be used on all marketing collaterals for the education program to raise awareness of the risk factors for type 2 diabetes and to encourage testing for susceptible individuals.

Promotion of Health Project in the Target Community

As the target community entails individuals with a family history of type 2 diabetes, the best locations to promote the health project will be healthcare facilities, health clinics, and hospitals. These places experience regular visits by diabetic patients and their family members

and placing appropriate advertisements for the health program at these locations will get a good number of participants belonging to the target community. Additionally, as the target community includes a younger age group, placing banners at schools and colleges will also be helpful in recruiting participants who have diabetic members in their families. Pamphlets will also be distributed at these locations to encourage maximum participation from the target community (Golden et al., 2017).

Specific Programs in the Health Project

Firstly, the health program will aim to promote awareness about the risk factors, symptoms, and adverse health conditions of diabetes and its long-term implications. This will be achieved by conducting diabetes education camps at different locations to educate the target community about their risk of developing diabetes. As healthcare practitioners are the first and primary contact for people with diabetes, they will be provided with the necessary material and training to educate the family members of diabetic patients and direct them to one of these camps. These education camps will aim to provide information regarding susceptibility to diabetes and the steps that can be implemented to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes. These steps will include dietary and lifestyle changes such as including exercise in their daily routine and reducing sugar consumption (Somannavar et al., 2008).

Secondly, opportunistic screening will be performed for all participants from the target community who attend these camps by means of capillary blood glucose screening using a handheld glucose monitor. All participants who are diagnosed with either pre-diabetes or early stage diabetes will be referred to another targeted educational program that will enable them to use a combination of anti-diabetic medication and lifestyle modification to manage their condition. All participants will be provided with specific instructions as to how they can include yoga or walking or aerobic exercises in their daily routine and specific foods they can include or avoid for better health outcomes (Shewade et al., 2015).

Evaluation of Health Promotion Project

Regardless of the diagnosis, all participants will be instructed to alter their lifestyle habits and a recheck of blood glucose will be performed after 6 months. At this point, the number of people who did not previously have a diagnosis of diabetes but developed the condition over the past 6 months will be noted. This procedure will be repeated every 6 months and at each timepoint, the number of people newly diagnosed with diabetes will be noted. At each point, the percentage of people who have developed diabetes will be compared with the previous percentage. This will help determine if the educational programs and lifestyle modifications are having an effect in decreasing the number of people who develop diabetes.

If a decreased number of diagnoses are observed, it will mean that the educational programs are proving successful and they can be continued on a larger scale. However, if there is no change in the percentage or there is an increase in the number of new diabetes cases in the target community, it can either mean that the participants are not implementing lifestyle modifications correctly or that the educational program is not strong enough to encourage people to change. Based on the results of these 6-monthly checks, appropriate modifications will be made to the educational programs and materials in order to influence change in the target community.

Conclusion

One of the most important ways by which a disease can be prevented is to identify risk factors of the disease and eliminate those in the population. Considering this approach, one of the key risk factors of type 2 diabetes is family history, and therefore, the health promotion project plan aimed to target those individuals with a family history of diabetes and provide them with the necessary information to protect them from the disease. By conducting blood glucose checks every 6 months, the degree of success of the health promotion project can be effectively evaluated.

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