

The Pharmacist's Role in Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes of the **Diabetic Patient**

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Diabetes mellitus is a micro vascular disease that impacts multiple organ systems. Arguably, diabetes is a cardiovascular disease. As pharmacists, we focus on medication therapy, but multi-organ diseases like diabetes have multiple risk factors that cannot all be mitigated with drugs.

Of particular concern are independent risk factors. Obesity, sedentary lifestyles, and smoking are risk factors that result in morbidity and mortality independently. They cause, or contribute to, morbidity and mortality even if hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, or blood glucose are treated with drugs.

This clinical knowledge section in this issue of the journal focuses on the first step in the therapy of diabetes, namely, therapeutic lifestyle changes (TLC). The targets for TLC are sedentary lifestyles, overweight or obesity, and poor nutritional habits.

TLC provides the prescription for

change – regular exercise, weight loss, and improved eating habits. The pharmacist is in a unique position to impact the changes required, because patients have more “face” time with them than any other health care professional. On average, patients visit pharmacists at least three times for every physician visit. As a result, pharmacists can, and should, take a primary care role in educating, training, and monitoring patients and their progress toward their TLC goals.

The clinical knowledge articles in this issue on exercise, nutrition and obesity provide the tools pharmacists will need to implement

their primary care role in TLC. In the article on exercise, Drs. Reta and Gong provide specific prescriptions for exercise, while in the article on nutrition Drs. Tidwell and Gong provide specific menu and diet instructions. The knowledge article on obesity by Mistert Lebowitz and Pazirandeh, and Dr. Stern considers the BMI monitoring necessary to reduce the risk of cardiovascular complications.

In addition to the clinical knowledge articles, the Business Models presented herein demonstrate the benefits of active pharmacist interventions and the value of diabetes consulting in the pharmacy setting. The interview with Iron Andy adds motivation for personal action, and Dr. Pascal's Pharmacy Lighter Side ensures that we don't take ourselves too seriously, even when we are providing critical assistance to the diabetic patient.

The pharmacist is a primary care provider for TLC for diabetic patients. The only action left is TO ACT! 📞