

The Sense of Responsibility for Health in Diabetic Patients: is it Important?

Mariusz Jaworski*

Department of Medical Psychology, Medical University of Warsaw, Poland

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***Corresponding author:** Mariusz Jaworski, Department of Medical Psychology, Warsaw School of Tourism and Hospitality, Vistula Group of Universities, Second Faculty of Medicine, Medical University of Warsaw, Vistula Group of Universities, Warsaw School of Tourism and Hospitality, Stokłosa 3 Str 02-787 Poland, Email: mariusz.jaworski@onet.pl

Introduction

In the World a significant percentage of people are characterized by unhealthy lifestyle, especially bad food habits, and physical inactivity. This unhealthy lifestyle could be a cause of many lifestyle diseases or diseases of civilization. If epidemiological data is anything to go by the most common lifestyle diseases are obesity, and diabetes [1,2]. Epidemiological data suggest that about 8.5% of adults aged 18 and older had diabetes in 2014. In the same year, high blood glucose was the cause of another 2.2 million deaths. Moreover, it is reported that overweight and obesity account for an estimated 8%-15% of the burden of disease in industrialized countries. What is more, World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that more than 1.9 billion adults aged 18 and older were overweight in 2014. In the same year, about 13% of the world's adult population (11% of men and 15% of women) were obese in 2014. According to this WHO aims to stimulate and support the adoption of effective measures for the surveillance, prevention and control of diabetes and its complications [3].

The main problem is associated with the analysis of the effectiveness of lifestyle modification programs. Probably, the one of the important predictors of the effectiveness of these programs could be psychosocial factors which have a strong influence on shaping health behavior, attitude towards health and disease, and lifestyle [4-6]. One of the interesting psychological factors, which can be important in case of the effectiveness of lifestyle modification programs, is the sense of responsibility for the health [5,6]. Sense of responsibility for health is a relatively new framework in health sciences. In the main, this psychological factor is defined as self-perceptions relating to motivation and the use of various behavioral strategies to keep good health [7]. This perception is related to the assessment of health as an important value in a lifetime. For this reason, 'sense of responsibility for health' is an important factor in health-related behavior. The highest level of this psychological factor is associated with the need for

greater knowledge about health-related activities which can keep optimal body state, and reduce the risk of the disease [8-10].

The empirical verification of sense of responsibility for health framework was taken by Adamus & Jaworski [8]. These authors have demonstrated the existence of two aspects of this type of responsibility: first, active involvement, and second - adequate behavior. Whereas active involvement concerns cognitive and motivational aspects related to the need for undertaking appropriate actions to maintain good health, adequate behaviors concern actions taken to maintain health or make improvements [7,8]. These authors prepared a specific research tool which allows the assessment of the severity of sense of responsibility for health [8].

Jaworski & Adamus [7] observed that an appropriate level of responsibility for health determines the higher level of motivation to treatment. It is reported particularly in preliminary analysis, which were carried out in diabetic patients (n=110) [8]. Very similar observations were reported in patients with diabetes with complications and accompanying diseases. Using the method of structural equation modeling (SEM), it was developed model which analyzed the relationship between some psychological characteristics (e.g. optimism) and sense of responsibility for health. In this study, it was observed that there are four main factors which influence on the formation of sense of responsibility for health in diabetic patients, such as: the health suggestibility, the dispositional optimism, the duration of therapy and the number of used drugs [9].

These preliminary studies have shown that there are sense of responsibility for health framework has practical implications in clinical practice with diabetic patients [8,9]. According to this, diabetic patients should be encouraged by doctors to be more active in the treatment and health promotion process. What is important, the effectiveness of treatment depends on patients'

motivation have for a given activity, and their expectations concerning health and medical care. This can be achieved by adequate doctors' behaviors related to improve the patients' sense of responsibility for health.

What is more, sense of responsibility for health could be an important element of the patients' motivation to change unhealthy lifestyle and has a positive impact on their self-efficacy. Probably, it is related to the fact that the high level of sense of responsibility for health is associated with the need for the greatest knowledge about health-related activities, and reduces the risk of the disease [11]. The important role of sense of responsibility for health could be supported by results of some study which analyzed patients' expectations related to medical visits. The most important patients' expectations are associated with information about disease and treatment [12,13]. According to this, doctors should discuss accurate and balanced information about treatment with patients, providing the opportunity to develop realistic expectations and make informed decisions.

Additionally, doctor should stress during medical visit that the therapy effectiveness depends on the patients' involvement. The patient should be aware of this. At the beginning, the patient may use the defense mechanisms which are an unconscious psychological mechanism that reduces anxiety arising from unacceptable or potentially harmful stimuli. For example, he/she may think that a doctor is only responsible for the therapy effectiveness, because he/she proposes treatments. Patients do not see how he/she could be responsibility for his/her health [14]. Additionally, it should be noted that the appropriate doctors' communication skills can affect the increasing sense of responsibility for health in patients with diabetes. This is particularly important in the context of a motivational interview. The motivational interview is defined as "a client-centered, directive method for enhancing intrinsic motivation to change by exploring and resolving ambivalence." [15]. Sense of responsibility for health could be an important psychological variable which has a relationship with a healthy lifestyle in diabetic patients. For this reason, lifestyle modification programs should strengthen the severity of sense of responsibility for health in this patient. Thus, further study is needed to see if the current results are replicated.

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