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Empowering People with Type Two Diabetes Through Online Support Groups

Abdulaziz Almanea¹, Peter Bath¹ and Laura Sbaffi¹

¹ Information School, University of Sheffield, UK

{amalmanea1}, {p.a.bath}, {l.sbaffi}@sheffield.ac.uk

Abstract

Background: Patient empowerment is a key factor in managing chronic conditions effectively. For people with Type 2 diabetes, managing the condition can be challenging, especially when diagnosis occurs in late adulthood. Online support groups can offer information and emotional support needed by people with Type 2 diabetes to gain a sense of empowerment.

Objective: To understand the influence of using online support groups in empowering people with Type 2 diabetes.

Methods: 312 messages from two UK-diabetes platforms have been collected and thematically analysed to understand how the usage of the platforms have affected the management of the illness for platform members.

Results: The sample was collected from 104 members (41% female, 33% male and 26% with no gender information). The initial results showed that members used the platforms to understand the nature of the condition as well as to understand other issues related to the management of the illness, such as diet, activity and medication.

Conclusions: Initial findings suggest that online support groups are a useful source of information for people with Type 2 diabetes. The platforms were found to be helpful for members to exchange experiences and share information. The next stage of the study will include analysing more posts from the platforms and undertaking semi-structured interviews with current and former members of the platforms.