

# What do people with diabetes want to know? Education and information needs of people with diabetes

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## Introduction

The provision of education and information forms a major part of chronic disease management. People with chronic disease who receive education are presumed to be in a better position to take responsibility for their own health, participate in their own health care and management, and thus maximize their health outcomes.

## Methods

Telephone interviews were used to determine the diabetes-related information and education needs among people with diabetes (n=133) who were participants in the North West Adelaide Health Study (NWAHS). NWAHS is a representative biomedical population study of adults aged 18 years and over living in the north west region of Adelaide.

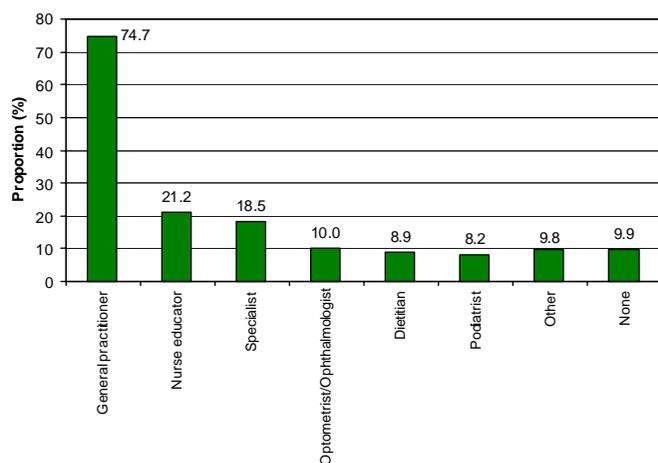
Education and information issues were first qualitatively explored in four focus groups of people with diabetes (n=29). The quantitative telephone questionnaire was developed from the themes that emerged in those focus groups.

## Results

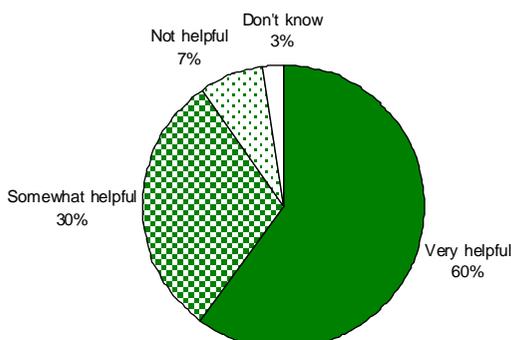
### Health professionals as sources of diabetes information

The proportion of people who had talked about their diabetes with relevant health professionals in the previous year is shown in Figure 1. The overall helpfulness of talking to at least one of these health professionals about diabetes is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 1: Health professionals that people had talked to about their diabetes**



**Figure 2: Helpfulness of talking to a health professional about diabetes**



### Other sources of diabetes information

- Diabetes Australia (24%), the Diabetes Australia Conquest newsletter (24%), pamphlets/brochures (16%), and other people with diabetes (9%) were reported as sources of information.
- Only 14% of study participants reported ever using the Internet to access diabetes-related information.
- Almost half (46%) of participants had attended a diabetes support group or session since being diagnosed with diabetes and, of these, 67% reported finding them very helpful.
- The majority of study participants (94%) reported knowing where to go or who to ask to find out diabetes-related information.

### Satisfaction with diabetes-related information about diabetes

- Most participants reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the information and education they currently received.
- 75% of participants reported receiving a sufficient amount of diabetes-related information.
- 20% of participants reported that they were not getting enough information about diabetes.
- Of participants diagnosed longer than 12 months ago, 52% reported that they felt the type of information about diabetes that they needed had changed since they were first diagnosed.
- The issues on which people with diabetes would like more information is listed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Diabetes related issues on which people with diabetes would like more information**

Issue*	%
Diet	12.3
Long-term effects of diabetes on eyes	10.7
Long-term effects of diabetes on kidneys	10.7
Long-term effects of diabetes on heart	10.5
Long-term effects of diabetes on feet	8.9
Shopping for correct food	5.4
Measuring glucose levels	2.2
Dining out	1.7
Medication	1.4
Exercise / fitness	0.4
Other	8.9
None / Already get enough information	65.9

\* Multiple responses possible

### Diabetes is something that everyone needs to think about

- Overall, 47% of participants considered that people in the general community were not aware of risk factors that could increase their chance of getting diabetes.

## Conclusion

The results of this study support the increasing recognition of the importance of exploring the perspectives and views of consumers in order to better inform diabetes education and information strategies.