



Compliance in Children and Teens with Diabetes

TRACEY CRAIG, M.A.

Importance of Childhood Compliance

- ▶ Longitudinal studies show compliance in childhood can:
 - ▶ Maximize glycemic control
 - ▶ Reduces the risk of premature mortality
 - ▶ Reduces the risk of future metabolic crisis
 - ▶ Improve long-term health outcomes through the lifespan

Middle Childhood Compliance

- ▶ Studies tend to focus more on adolescents with diabetes, so the 6-12 year-old age group is often ignored
 - ▶ Good glycemic control in this stage can prevent progression of complications in adolescence onwards, so this group should be studied more frequently
- ▶ Developmental Changes in this stage include
 - ▶ Behavioral mastery
 - ▶ Learning impulse control
 - ▶ Learning what is acceptable vs. unacceptable behavior
 - ▶ Physical mastery
 - ▶ Developing coordination needed to complete daily tasks, play sports, use instruments, etc.
 - ▶ Social mastery
 - ▶ Learning what friendship means
 - ▶ Developing attachments outside the family

Challenges

- ▶ Child has poor impulse control
- ▶ Child behaves unacceptably
- ▶ Child has difficulty mastering testing
- ▶ Child wants to participate in sports, band, and other activities that mean time away from home
- ▶ Child wants to spend the night with peers or vacation with peers

Solutions

- ▶ Model impulse control check for underlying neurological issues
- ▶ Set and enforce consistent boundaries
- ▶ Consider developmental stage, don't rush independence
- ▶ Discuss what needs to be done to ensure child can manage adherence, including working with school officials to help them understand the child's needs
- ▶ Talk with host parents about expectations

Best Predictors of Compliance in Middle Childhood

- ▶ Parental support and monitoring throughout preadolescence
 - ▶ Don't expect kids this age to independently adhere to. Studies show children in this stage who test their own sugar have poorer metabolic control
- ▶ Family cohesion
 - ▶ Children whose families are warm, supportive, and close show better adherence
- ▶ Less parental restrictiveness
 - ▶ Parental restrictiveness was associated with *poor* glycemic control.
 - ▶ Restrictive/authoritarian parenting that uses coercive tactics can result in anger, frustration, feelings of helplessness for the child

Adolescent Compliance

- ▶ Obstacles to Adolescent Compliance
 - ▶ Developmental behaviors
 - ▶ Adolescent Spontaneity
 - ▶ Sense of immortality
 - ▶ Sense of exceptionalism
 - ▶ Heightened concerns about social context and peers
 - ▶ Incomplete knowledge and understanding of treatment regimens and future health risks
 - ▶ Flux in family dynamics
 - ▶ Parents struggling with setting age-appropriate limits
 - ▶ Parents concerned with other life issues
 - ▶ Perceived social pressures
 - ▶ Adolescents strive to fit in, not stand out

Best Predictors of Compliance in Adolescence

- ▶ Encouraging and nonjudgmental family support in the daily tasks of monitoring and insulin administration
 - ▶ Encourage compliance rather than coercing it
- ▶ Lack of family conflict
 - ▶ Adolescents in high-conflict families showed poorer glycemic control
- ▶ Good problem-solving skills
 - ▶ Guide them through other life problems to foster self-efficacy
- ▶ Flexible dietary recommendations
 - ▶ Restrictive eating can be difficult for teens, as eating with peers is often a major social event
- ▶ Use technology
 - ▶ Teens adapt to new technology easily, so prompts such as daily text or social media messages can be helpful
- ▶ Good problem-solving skills
 - ▶ Guide them through other life problems to foster self-efficacy

Other Factors in Adolescent Care

- ▶ Physiological changes in adolescence lead to greater insulin resistance during puberty, so even with compliance management can be difficult
- ▶ Psychological resistance is difficult to address
- ▶ Home-based, family centered care may be necessary for patients with poor metabolic control
- ▶ Until technology improves this will continue to be an at-risk group
 - ▶ provide support
 - ▶ ease the difficulties of care
 - ▶ minimize the intrusion of care on their daily lives