

Module title- Introduction to Public Health

Module Number- LHSC4008

Assignment Title- Report on a Health issue

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Introduction-

In this report I will be discussing the disease of Type-2 Diabetes. There are two types of diabetes and in this chronic condition the body cannot produce enough of the hormone insulin or doesn't utilise the insulin it has appropriately, due to this it leads to increased blood sugar levels which overtime can affect the kidney and heart function, the eyes and the nerves. 'Type 2 diabetes accounts for around 90% of UK cases' and 'you can reduce the risk through healthy eating, regular exercise and achieving a healthy body weight.' Public Health Wales (2023) There are many clear symptoms that aid in the efficient detection of this type of diabetes that include numbness in hands/feet, unexplained weight loss or gain, fatigue and increased hunger. However, type 2 diabetes often develops gradually so it can be difficult to detect 'estimated to affect 380 million people worldwide by 2025' PubMed' Central (2015) Type 2 diabetes is becoming more common even in younger individuals in the UK, so it is important that symptoms and signs are considered earlier 'Once known as an illness that mainly affected older adults, it is now being seen more often in people under 40 linked to unhealthy diets, lack of physical activity, and increasing rates of obesity.' Diabetes UK (2023)

Impacts of Type 2 diabetes-

There are various complications that the condition of type 2 diabetes has that can have a long-term impact on an individual's life and getting them under control can be relatively difficult. Type 2 diabetes puts individuals with the condition at higher risk for heart issues such as attacks and failure, this occurs due the increased blood sugar levels damaging the blood vessels and leaving fatty deposits called atherosclerosis, these deposits cause the narrowing of the veins, restricting the blood flow to the heart and vital organs. 'Globally cardiovascular disease affects approximately 32.2% of all persons with type 2 diabetes. A major cause of mortality among people with type 2 diabetes.' PubMed' Central (2015).

Another major impact of type 2 diabetes is blindness. This is caused by the increase in blood sugars causing damage to the blood vessels in the retina such as leaking, swelling and the blockage of them. This is called Diabetic retinopathy which is irreversible and can cause complete blindness to the individual's eye; it can be discovered early before complete sight loss with regular eye examinations and controlling blood pressure.

Physically, type 2 diabetes has a significant impact on the individual, gradually they can suffer gravely from the condition if it is not monitored closely and if extra precautions are not taken after the diagnosis. However, as well as that there are many things that cause emotional issues for the individual's wellbeing. Living with a long-term condition like this can cause a high level of stress overtime and develop into depression due to the big changes in lifestyle and the constant worry of monitoring continuously. They may feel as though they are a burden to their carers and family. The individual's carers will also have an increased level of worry and stress for them, having to adapt and learn with them to ensure they're providing the best support they are able to can be a reason for the carer to change everything about their lives. Both the individual with the condition and those that see to their care are impacted heavily.

Type 2 diabetes can also produce another stress financially, even though the NHS provides most of the essential treatments and monitoring, there are several additional costs that the individual and/or their carers must provide for such as additional equipment to measure sugar levels and transport for appointments can also be expensive. Daily costs have increased significantly so many individuals struggle to balance their expenditure over their needs '77% say that the rising cost of living is negatively impacting how they manage their diabetes or risk of diabetes' Diabetes UK (2022) In addition to this the carers will be impacted financially; they may require more time off work to provide care for the individual or when they are required to attend appointments, in some cases they will be needed to become the fulltime carer and therefore the income will be impacted significantly.

Consequences on the NHS and community-

Type 2 diabetes places a significant strain on the NHS due to the number of cases increasing every year. The NHS already deals with the increases pressure providing general care overall as it is, and type 2 diabetes adds more pressure to the NHS due to the complications and effects it entails such as cardiovascular disease and sight-loss which are some of many. Due to this the NHS dedicates a large amount of their staff, time and resources to aid care for individuals with this condition. Type 2 diabetes is a progressive and long-term condition that means patients require treatment and monitoring throughout their life. Consistent medication adjustments are required to ensure the dosage of medication is adequate for the patients and their needs, regular healthcare checks are required, and nurses are needed to make frequent reviews to ensure all care is proper and everything is covered. All these various things cost the NHS a large amount in terms of staff, finances and even time. Overall type 2 diabetes is another additional strain on the NHS that results in longer waiting times and increased workloads for the professionals.

Other than the NHS, Type 2 diabetes also places a strain on the local communities and their services. There are many services and programmes focused on aiding those with the condition and how it can be avoided/detected early however, this also requires lots of funding and staff to ensure these services are provided locally to the community. The wider community will be affected as many individuals seek support due to the on-going nature of the condition and finding the way to navigate it is difficult, therefore they will seek assistance from the support groups community and health centres. They may be able to support with getting additional support at home or help with completing daily tasks, Local health centres cannot accommodate to increased needs and the higher demand and may feel as though they are not providing enough support to their community.

Controlling the disease-

There are many ways the condition can be controlled. Even though there is no cure it can be managed through different measures such as medication for type 2 diabetes, lifestyle and habit changes and close monitoring of the blood sugar levels. By sticking by these measures, one can get the condition to be more manageable and under control. One of the most impactful measures is lifestyle changes such as changes to the diet, for instance trying to include fruits and vegetables and whole grains as a daily intake this way the blood sugar levels will be regulated, and the condition will be more under control. Another change is increasing physical activity such as increasing the amount of exercise the individual is partaking in even if that is just walking or running to help to keep the body weight manageable and the body fit.

However, additional measures must be implemented to ensure the improvement of the condition. By constant measuring of the blood sugar levels, the individual can see once they are high or low and take action to improve it, the individual will come to know the various things that affect the blood sugar levels e.g. some foods or some activities they partake in. For example, 'Not enough food, such as a meal or snack with fewer carbohydrates than usual or a missed meal or snack can make the blood glucose levels drop' National Library of Medicine (2018) so in the future the patient will ensure to eat full proper meals with large amount of carbohydrates to ensure their levels are optimal. Monitoring is a very important measure that helps keep track of their diabetes and helps keep it in check, when the levels are also noted down frequently the GP can notice patterns and assess differences in what affects the levels.

In addition to all these changes the individual will require medicine and continuous adjustment of the medication to find what works best for them and what keeps their blood glucose levels under control. Initially the GP will prescribe different medications, and the patient will have to see what works the best for them. The most common

medicines are sulfonylureas (several different types of tablets) which stimulate the pancreas to make more insulin. And metformin which normally the first medicine prescribed, 'Metformin is the first anti-diabetic drug prescription for 80–90% of type 2 diabetes patients' National Library of Medicine (2020) it supports the body utilise it's insulin more effectively. Both these medicines help the body keep the diabetes under control and aids in helping the body adjust. With regular monitoring the healthcare professionals will be able to see if further medicine or supports are required.

Controlling type 2 diabetes can be difficult but by taking different measures and changes to control and monitor the condition, it can become more manageable. If the healthcare professionals work together and in collaboration with the patient, then they will be able to help them deal with the condition in their daily life and help them become more accustomed to it. many patients that are newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes still aim to work alongside it and adjust to it rather than letting them be affected by it completely 'the percentage of people newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes attending structured education courses increased 27%' Gov.UK(2025) the individuals are attempting to take part in the education that is provided for their condition and seeking help and support for it.

Conclusion-

In conclusion type 2 diabetes is a condition that the patient will require individuals to make many adjustments, lifestyle changes, change to their routines and monitoring. The condition impacts both the individuals and their families heavily, affecting them physically, mentally, financially and emotionally in many ways. Type 2 diabetes is an ongoing condition that changes the individual from the moment they are diagnosed for the rest of their lives, learning to deal with it is a big adjustment not only for the individuals for the people around them who act as the carers. Ultimately, type 2 diabetes is a complex, long-term condition that must be learnt to manage with overtime through the help of the healthcare system, local communities and the carers around them.

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