

Abstract Title

Assessment of social media & technology as a tool for diabetes lifestyle education for youth at risk, or with type 2 diabetes (T2D) at Diabetes Grey Bruce (DGB) in Owen Sound, Ontario
J. Storrar¹, C. Campbell², A. Edmonstone²; ¹Division of Food and Nutritional Sciences, Brescia University College at Western University, London, ON, ²Diabetes Grey Bruce, Owen Sound, ON

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: Diabetes educators at Diabetes Grey Bruce (DGB) are interested in determining the value of social media and other online technologies as a tool for providing evidence-based information to at-risk children and their families.

OBJECTIVES: First, to examine the use of social media and technology for health promotion among children attending DGB (≤ 18 years old) who are at risk or have type 2 diabetes (T2D) and their accompanying parents. Second, to determine the interest in social media and technology for the dissemination of diet and lifestyle education.

METHODS: This was an 8-week qualitative study aimed at improving online patient services at DGB. Children and parents were provided with two separate surveys. Nine children's surveys were distributed, eight were completed. Ten parent surveys were distributed, nine were completed.

RESULTS: Children had a greater interest than parents in getting healthy lifestyle information from mobile apps (75% vs. 33.3%), the internet (62.5% vs. 33.3%), and social media (37.5% vs. 11.1%). More specifically, children had a greater interest than parents in using technology such as videos (87.5% vs. 50%), games (87.5% vs. 25%), social media (62.5% vs. 37.5%), and mobile apps (50% vs. 37.5%) to access information about healthy living. Interest in accessing healthy lifestyle information through the DGB website is higher in children (37.5%) than in parents (33.3%). The top four learning interests of children included cooking skills (75%), physical activity (62.5%), healthy body weight (50%), and healthy meals and snack ideas (50%).

CONCLUSION: Despite the differences in learning methods and social media use, children had a greater interest in the use of social media and online technology platforms for learning about healthy living than their parents.

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FIELD OF DIETETICS: Social media and online technology can be used as a tool for dietitians and diabetes educators to provide evidence-based material to at-risk youth.