Adolescent Psychosocial Adjustment and Diabetes Control
Identifying Risk & Protective Factors

Jamil A. Malik

The research presented in this dissertation was designed to assess the weak and confounding variables in the relationship between stress and psychological adjustment in adolescents with type 1 diabetes. The study results support that both disease control and psychological adjustment share some common underlying mechanisms, resulting in the inferred role of biopsychosocial factors. The presentation of these findings was investigated to develop an understanding of the shared underlying mechanisms with the ultimate goal to garner interventions for a better disease control combined with the best possible psychological adjustment. The study conducted is the south-western part of the Netherlands and involved 437 (15-15 year olds) with diabetes with type 1 diabetes and parents and diabetics. The study utilized these two instruments for the assessment of diabetes specific support (i.e., M-SSS, Family, and MD-SSS-Primiter). The technique for reliable measurement of this protective factor further the risk and protective factors was investigated regardless to which relative considerations, psychosocial adjustment, diabetes control, and treatment adherence. Disease-related stress appeared to be a key risk factor of the parallel mediation of the effect of treatment adherence on diabetes self-care and psychological adjustment. Conflict was support but clear progression regarding both diabetes control and psychological adjustment by decreasing stress and improving adherence. Contrary to generic support, diabetes-specific support although it improved adherence had no incremental effect on diabetes-related stress resulting in a net negative effect on psychological adjustment and diabetes control. Finally, diabetes behavioral autonomy appeared important as a factor to elucidate the unexpected diabetes-specific support-stress relationship suggesting the importance of typical developmental issues of adolescence. Based on these results, a conceptual care model for adolescents with type 1 diabetes is presented suggesting that balanced manipulation of genetic, diabetes specific, and autonomy support may result in a better diabetes control and the best possible psychosocial adjustment.