Type 2 diabetes is a major chronic disease with an increasing incidence and prevalence, due to population growth, ageing, and the large rise in the prevalence of obesity caused by unhealthy diets and a lack of physical activity. Adequate treatment of type 2 diabetes is important to prevent or delay the onset of severe micro- and macrovascular complications, like cardiovascular disease. Due to the chronic character of the disease, diabetes care is complex and does not only involve treatment with medication, but also dealing with psychological problems, and a change of dietary intake and physical activity.

Disease management is believed to have a high potential to improve patients’ outcomes above the classical healthcare system. Disease management is defined as ‘a systematic, population-based approach to identify persons at risk, intervene with specific programs of care, and measure clinical and other outcomes’. The main element of disease management is patient empowerment, which is defined as ‘helping people to discover and use their own ability to gain mastery over their disease’. It is known that disease management works in experimental settings but it is unclear if it is effective on the long term and in real-life settings. In addition, evidence on interventions focused on the increase of patients’ self-management of diabetes is inconclusive.

Therefore, the aim of the present thesis was to gain more insight into disease management and patient empowerment for patients with type 2 diabetes.