

Follow-up Mental Health Care in Youth and Young Adults with Type 1 Diabetes After Positive Depression Screen and/or Suicidal Ideation

Objective: Individuals with type 1 diabetes have higher rates of depression and suicidal ideation (SI) compared to the general population, and symptoms of depression are often associated with higher A1C levels and complications. However, there is a paucity of literature on rates of mental health follow-up after screening positive for depressive symptoms and/or SI in diabetes clinics. This study evaluated mental health follow-up rates in youth and young adults with type 1 diabetes after a positive screen and identified differences in those who obtained follow-up mental health care versus those who did not. We hypothesized that mental health follow up would be common and those with mental health treatment after positive screening would have subsequent decreased depressive symptoms and better glycemic management.

Methods: Patients who scored positive for depressive symptoms and/or SI using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 between January 2016-July 2018 were identified via retrospective chart review. Demographic, type 1 diabetes data, and mental health follow-up after positive screen were obtained from chart review. T-tests and chi-squared tests were used to compare groups. Logistic regression and piecewise linear mixed models were used to examine predictors of obtaining mental health care and A1C change.

Results: Of 1376 screened, 200 patients (14.5%) had positive depressive symptoms and/or SI. Of these, 53% (n=106) obtained mental health follow-up care. Males were less likely to obtain follow-up ($p < 0.01$). Those who had mental health follow-up had decreasing A1C over the following year.

Conclusion: This study's findings suggest increased assistance and monitoring is needed to ensure follow-up mental health care is obtained, particularly in males. Further research is needed to identify barriers in obtaining mental health care and to identify methods to improve access to mental health care for those with type 1 diabetes, especially in Spanish-speaking populations.