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Abstract

Purpose:

Explore the emotional experience of people with diabetes as they encounter words and phrases that have been previously identified as problematic and evaluate potential differences in their emotional impact based on type of diabetes and demographic characteristics.

Methods:

A cross-sectional descriptive study employing an online survey of 107 adults with type 1 diabetes and 110 adults with type 2 diabetes. A semantic differential scale was used to examine feeling states associated with negative diabetes language. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and frequencies were calculated for all study variables. For each target word, frequencies of participants who endorsed a positive, neutral, or negative affective response on the semantic differential scale are reported.

Results:

People with diabetes reported feeling blamed, misunderstood, hopeless, judged, not motivated, and not trusting in response to “noncompliant,” “unmotivated,” “in denial,” “preventable,” “failed,” “should,” “uncontrolled,” “what did you do wrong,” and “you could end up blind or on dialysis.” Participants who have type 1 diabetes and are female, White, more educated, and younger reported more negative feelings about the target words.

Conclusion:

People with diabetes experience highly negative affective responses when they read and hear previously identified words and phrases considered to be judgmental and unhelpful.



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