

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this study was to explore how patients in an academic primary care setting perceived the role of community connections in care management for Type 2 DM.

INTRODUCTION:

- Understanding patient perspectives is critical for improving care management for Type 2 diabetes mellitus (Type 2 DM) in academic primary care settings.
- Patient perspectives have been linked to patient outcomes.¹
- Type 2 DM peer support and community participation has shown to reduce health disparities and aid in patient education.²

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Primary Care Patients’ Perceptions and Experiences in an Underserved Community: Academic-Practice Linkages to Improve Care for Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2 DM)

Table 1. Theme Descriptions and Example Quotes

Theme Name	Description	Example Quote
Addressing social determinants of health	Academic primary practices play a critical role in addressing not only traditional components of the biomedical model but also social determinants of health.	“We need more community support and outreach. You connect to people where they are.” (Black, female, 59)
Reaching marginalized and vulnerable persons	Finding ways to reach marginalized and vulnerable populations is important to improve the health of communities in underserved areas.	“You connect people through physicians, churches, barbershops and beauty salons, community groups, food banks, schools and school nurses. There is more too.” (White male, 72).
Creating information pathways	Information attainment and dissemination is important for creating connections and linkages with underserved communities.	“Information is key. Nutrition classes for diabetes are so helpful to understand what diabetes is and what it does to the body. Community can help you understand what it is that you're dealing with.”(Female, Hispanic, 46).
Supporting collaborative advocacy	Advocacy and activism is need to bring about lasting changes that can support underserved community’s health.	“Act as a catalyst for other things, talk to people.” (Male, White, 64).
Improving acceptability of care provision	Finding ways to improve the acceptability of care provision is needed to improve patient engagement.	“When I was first diagnosed, I didn’t want it to go any further... Very scared of this [care].” (Black, female, 65)

METHODS:

- This study used qualitative data from a randomized controlled pilot trial to test the effectiveness of an integrated intervention for type 2 diabetes mellitus (Type 2 DM) and depression incorporating patients' social determinants of health.
- The sample was drawn from a Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) designated Medically Underserved Area as well as a HRSA-designated Low Income Primary Care Health Professions Shortage Area.
- Patients who received care from an academic primary care practice with Type 2 DM were eligible for participation.
- This nested qualitative study involved semi-structured interviews.
- Semi-structured interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and assessed used a grounded theory constant comparative method.

DISCUSSION:

The results highlight the importance of initiatives that aim to incorporate community connections into care for Type 2 DM in academic primary care practice settings.

