



WOUND MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND



WMAI Bursary 2013 -Telephone-Based Wellness Coaching: A Feasible Approach to Continuous Support for People with Type 2 Diabetes?



I wish to acknowledge the Wound Management Association of Ireland for awarding me a research/ education bursary in 2013. This award enabled me to travel to

the Diabetes UK conference in Manchester to present some of the findings from my PhD study. This mixed methods study explored the use of telephone based wellness coaching in supporting health behaviour change in Type 2 diabetes. Wellness coaching was underpinned by motivational interviewing, the transtheoretical model of behaviour change and appreciative inquiry. The aim of coaching was to empower the individual in self-management of their chronic illness and ten participants were coached to identify a personal wellness vision and goals and strategies for behaviour change. Coaching calls over a three month period were taped and thematically analysed with biomedical and psychosocial data collected at baseline, three, six and 12 months.

One of the findings was the theme 'visualising wellness' which included being able to enjoy life, living longer and improving physical health and wellbeing. A number of participants expressed a change in their way of thinking for example: *'I have just realised I have to do this myself'*. People expressed enjoyment of the new behaviour and no longer related to it grudgingly: ... *I'm achieving something that you know I had a grudge against doing and I'm always pleased when I come back from a walk, not in the negative, not oh God, I'm glad I'm back. Gee I'm glad I did*

that'. The shift in thinking for some people was related to taking control and responsibility for their own health: *'So I'd hoped that that little bit extra Glucophage might help a little bit until I am a bit more responsible in my own actions, you know?..... But for me to ask for more tablets'*. Participants' experienced changed thinking around health behaviour using phrases such as *'becoming second nature'* and *'it's becoming a habit'*. Setting goals, helping relationships, rewards and counterconditioning were key processes for maintenance but participants expressed a desire for ongoing support.

Clinically significant reductions were seen in HbA1c, (-0.8%) weight (-1.7kg) and waist circumference (-3.5cm) after three months. In addition diabetes empowerment scores (DES-SF) increased (3.8 to 4.28 $p=0.03$) and diabetes distress scores reduced (2.02 to 1.29 $p=0.002$). Some of these effects deteriorated at six and twelve months suggesting the need for continuous support. My on-going research interest lies in testing wellness coaching in a clinical trial and exploring how we can facilitate nurse and health care professionals to use empowerment skills in practice.

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