



## Pharmacists can improve diabetes care

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BUFFALO, N.Y., Dec. 30 (UPI) -- Enhancing a diabetes patient's access to care via collaborative physician-pharmacist relationships can yield lower blood glucose levels, U.S. researchers say.

Erin Slazak, an assistant professor of pharmacy practice at the University at Buffalo, says the study of 50 patients with type 2 diabetes demonstrated in just six months clinical pharmacists, in collaboration with primary care providers, were able to achieve a significant reduction in patients' hemoglobin A1C measurement, which measures excess glucose in the blood.

Patients referred had been identified as having difficulty controlling their blood sugar.

Pharmacists spent an initial one-hour appointment with each patient, working up detailed health records including dietary information and all medications and disease conditions. After that, patients could call or make appointments with pharmacists at will.

"We did extensive education with patients about how to manage their conditions," Slazak says in a statement. "We were instrumental in getting some to start insulin."

For patients in the initial stages of administering insulin, it was common to be contacted once every few days. The pharmacists made suggestions to physicians about changes in medications, dosages or lifestyle that might be beneficial to their patients.

The study, published in the Journal of the American Pharmacists Association, finds the clinical improvements resulted in monthly costs per patient dropping by approximately \$212 even though there were nominal increases in the cost of medications prescribed.

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