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## Complete Summary

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### GUIDELINE TITLE

Standards of medical care in diabetes. VII. Diabetes care in specific populations.

### BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCE(S)

American Diabetes Association (ADA). Standards of medical care in diabetes. VII. Diabetes care in specific populations. Diabetes Care 2008 Jan; 31(Suppl 1):S33-7.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence grading system for clinical practice recommendations (A through C, E) is defined at the end of the "Major Recommendations" field.

#### Older Adults

- Older adults who are functional, cognitively intact, and have significant life expectancy should receive diabetes treatment using goals developed for younger adults. (E)
- Glycemic goals for older adults who do not meet the above criteria may be relaxed using individual criteria, but hyperglycemia leading to symptoms or risk of acute hyperglycemic complications should be avoided in all patients. (E)
- Other cardiovascular risk factors should be treated in older adults with consideration of the timeframe of benefit and the individual patient. Treatment of hypertension is indicated in virtually all older adults, and lipid and aspirin therapy may benefit those with life expectancy at least equal to the timeframe of primary or secondary prevention trials. (E)
- Screening for diabetic complications should be individualized in older adults, but particular attention should be paid to complications that would lead to functional impairment. (E)

#### Definitions:

#### American Diabetes Association's Evidence Grading System for Clinical Practice Recommendations

A

Clear evidence from well-conducted, generalizable, randomized controlled trials that are adequately powered, including:

- Evidence from a well-conducted multicenter trial
- Evidence from a meta-analysis that incorporated quality ratings in the analysis
- Compelling non-experimental evidence (i.e., "all or none" rule developed by the Center for Evidence Based Medicine at Oxford\*)

Supportive evidence from well-conducted randomized, controlled trials that are adequately powered, including:

- Evidence from a well-conducted trial at one or more institutions
- Evidence from a meta-analysis that incorporated quality ratings in the analysis

*\*Either all patients died before therapy and at least some survived with therapy, or some patients died without therapy and none died with therapy. Example: use of insulin in the treatment of diabetic ketoacidosis.*

## **B**

Supportive evidence from well-conducted cohort studies, including:

- Evidence from a well-conducted prospective cohort study or registry
- Evidence from a well-conducted meta-analysis of cohort studies

Supportive evidence from a well-conducted case-control study

## **C**

Supportive evidence from poorly controlled or uncontrolled studies, including:

- Evidence from randomized clinical trials with one or more major or three or more minor methodological flaws that could invalidate the results
- Evidence from observational studies with high potential for bias (such as case series with comparison with historical controls)
- Evidence from case series or case reports

Conflicting evidence with the weight of evidence supporting the recommendation

## **E**

Expert consensus or clinical experience

## **CLINICAL ALGORITHM(S)**

None provided

## EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### TYPE OF EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The type of supporting evidence is identified and graded for each recommendation (see the "Major Recommendations" field).

## BENEFITS/HARMS OF IMPLEMENTING THE GUIDELINE RECOMMENDATIONS

### POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Appropriate detection and management of diabetes and its complications in specific populations
- Preconception care of diabetes appears to reduce the risk of congenital malformations

### POTENTIAL HARMS

- **Considerations for diabetic women of childbearing age:** Among the oral antidiabetic agents, metformin and acarbose are classified as category B and all others as category C; potential risks and benefits of oral antidiabetic agents in the preconception period must be carefully weighed, recognizing that data are insufficient to establish the safety of these agents in pregnancy.
- **Considerations for older individuals:** Special care is required in prescribing and monitoring pharmacologic therapy in older adults. Metformin is often contraindicated because of renal insufficiency or significant heart failure. Sulfonylureas, other insulin secretagogues, and insulin can cause hypoglycemia. Insulin use requires that patient or caregivers have good visual and motor skills and cognitive ability. Drugs should be started at the lowest dose and titrated up gradually until targets are reached or side effects develop.

## CONTRAINDICATIONS

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- Among the drugs commonly used in the treatment of patients with diabetes, a number may be relatively or absolutely contraindicated during pregnancy. Statins are category X (contraindicated for use in pregnancy) and should be discontinued before conception, as should angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors. Angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) are category C (risk cannot be ruled out) in the first trimester, but category D (positive evidence of risk) in later pregnancy, and should generally be discontinued before pregnancy.
- Thiazolidinediones (TZDs) can cause fluid retention, which may exacerbate or lead to heart failure. They are contraindicated in patients with congestive heart failure (CHF) (New York Heart Association class III and IV), and if used at all should be used very cautiously in those with, or at risk for, milder degrees of CHF.

- See also "Potential Harms" field above for information on metformin use in older individuals.

## QUALIFYING STATEMENTS

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- Evidence is only one component of clinical decision-making. Clinicians care for patients, not populations; guidelines must always be interpreted with the needs of the individual patient in mind. Individual circumstances, such as comorbid and coexisting diseases, age, education, disability, and, above all, patient's values and preferences, must also be considered and may lead to different treatment targets and strategies. Also, conventional evidence hierarchies, such as the one adapted by American Diabetes Association, may miss some nuances that are important in diabetes care. For example, while there is excellent evidence from clinical trials supporting the importance of achieving glycemic control, the optimal way to achieve this result is less clear. It is difficult to assess each component of such a complex intervention.
- While individual preferences, comorbidities, and other patient factors may require modification of goals, targets that are desirable for most patients with diabetes are provided. These standards are not intended to preclude more extensive evaluation and management of the patient by other specialists as needed.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINE

### DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

In recent years, numerous health care organizations, ranging from large health care systems such as the U.S. Veteran's Administration to small private practices have implemented strategies to improve diabetes care. Successful programs have published results showing improvement in process measures such as measurement of A1C, lipids, and blood pressure. Successful interventions have been focused at the level of health care professionals, delivery systems, and patients. Features of successful programs reported in the literature include:

- Improving health care professional education regarding the standards of care through formal and informal education programs.
- Delivery of diabetes self-management education (DSME), which has been shown to increase adherence to standard of care.
- Adoption of practice guidelines, with participation of health care professionals in the process. Guidelines should be readily accessible at the point of service, such as on patient charts, in examining rooms, in "wallet or pocket cards," on personal digital assistants (PDAs), or on office computer systems. Guidelines should begin with a summary of their major recommendations instructing health care professionals what to do and how to do it.
- Use of checklists that mirror guidelines have been successful at improving adherence to standards of care.
- Systems changes, such as provision of automated reminders to health care professionals and patients, reporting of process and outcome data to

providers, and especially identification of patients at risk because of failure to achieve target values or a lack of reported values.

- Quality improvement programs combining Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) or other cycles of analysis and intervention with provider performance data.
- Practice changes, such as clustering of dedicated diabetes visits into specific times within a primary care practice schedule and/or visits with multiple health care professionals on a single day and group visits.
- Tracking systems either with an electronic medical record or patient registry have been helpful at increasing adherence to standards of care by prospectively identifying those requiring assessments and/or treatment modifications. They likely could have greater efficacy if they suggested specific therapeutic interventions to be considered for a particular patient at a particular point in time.
- A variety of non-automated systems, such as mailing reminders to patients, chart stickers, and flow sheets, have been useful to prompt both providers and patients.
- Availability of case or (preferably) care management services, usually by a nurse. Nurses, pharmacists, and other non-physician health care professionals using detailed algorithms working under the supervision of physicians and/or nurse education calls have also been helpful. Similarly dietitians using medical nutrition therapy (MNT) guidelines have been demonstrated to improve glycemic control.
- Availability and involvement of expert consultants, such as endocrinologists and diabetes educators.

Evidence suggests that these individual initiatives work best when provided as components of a multifactorial intervention. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the contribution of each component; however, it is clear that optimal diabetes management requires an organized, systematic approach and involvement of a coordinated team of health care professionals.

## **IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS**

### Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) Downloads

For information about [availability](#), see the "Availability of Companion Documents" and "Patient Resources" fields below.

## **INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE (IOM) NATIONAL HEALTHCARE QUALITY REPORT CATEGORIES**

### **IOM CARE NEED**

Living with Illness  
Staying Healthy

### **IOM DOMAIN**

Effectiveness  
Patient-centeredness

## IDENTIFYING INFORMATION AND AVAILABILITY

### **BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCE(S)**

American Diabetes Association (ADA). Standards of medical care in diabetes. VII. Diabetes care in specific populations. Diabetes Care 2008 Jan; 31(Suppl 1):S33-7.

### **ADAPTATION**

Not applicable: The guideline was not adapted from another source.

### **DATE RELEASED**

1998 (revised 2008 Jan)

### **GUIDELINE DEVELOPER(S)**

American Diabetes Association - Professional Association

### **SOURCE(S) OF FUNDING**

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### **GUIDELINE COMMITTEE**

Professional Practice Committee

### **COMPOSITION OF GROUP THAT AUTHORED THE GUIDELINE**

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### **FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES/CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Not stated

### **GUIDELINE STATUS**

This is the current release of the guideline.

This guideline updates a previous version: American Diabetes Association (ADA). Standards of medical care in diabetes. VII. Diabetes care in specific populations. Diabetes Care 2007 Jan; 30(Suppl 1):S24-7.

### **GUIDELINE AVAILABILITY**

Electronic copies: Available from the [American Diabetes Association \(ADA\) Web site](#).

## AVAILABILITY OF COMPANION DOCUMENTS

The following are available:

- Introduction. Diabetes Care 31:S1-S2, 2008.
- Summary of revisions for the 2008 clinical practice recommendations. Diabetes Care 31:S3-S4, 2008.
- Executive summary: standards of medical care in diabetes. Diabetes Care 31:S5-S11, 2008.
- Strategies for improving diabetes care. Diabetes Care 31:S44, 2008.

Electronic copies: Available from the [American Diabetes Association \(ADA\) Web site](#).

The following are also available:

- Diagnosis and classification of diabetes mellitus. Diabetes Care 2008 Jan; 31 Suppl 1:S55-60. Electronic copies: Available from the [American Diabetes Association \(ADA\) Web site](#).
- 2008 clinical practice recommendations standards of care. Personal digital assistant (PDA) download. Available from the [American Diabetes Association \(ADA\) Web site](#).

## PATIENT RESOURCES

None available

## NGC STATUS

This summary was completed by ECRI on April 2, 2001. The information was verified by the guideline developer on August 24, 2001. This summary was updated by ECRI on January 29, 2002, April 21, 2003, March 23, 2004, July 1, 2005, and March 17, 2006 and April 26, 2007. This summary was updated most recently by ECRI Institute on March 31, 2008. The updated information was verified by the guideline developer on May 15, 2008.

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