

# Information avoidance and diabetes – a preliminary empirical study

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Information avoidance is 'any behaviour intended to prevent or delay the acquisition of available but potentially unwanted information.'<sup>5</sup>

## WHY?

### Why research information avoidance?

**Assumption:** information **always** aids decision-making.<sup>4</sup>

**Reality:** people sometimes **avoid** information.<sup>3</sup>

### Why research diabetes?

- Major human costs
  - 4.7 million people in the UK have diabetes.<sup>2</sup> That's 7% of the population.
  - Complications can include heart disease, amputation and blindness.<sup>2</sup>
- Major financial costs
  - £10 billion annually in the UK alone<sup>2</sup> That's 10% of the NHS budget

### Why is information science relevant?

Diabetes management centres on **data** and **information**.

- Management is mostly done by patients:
  - monitoring their own blood-sugar levels
  - calculating their own insulin doses, based on **data** (e.g. blood-sugar, diet, exercise).
  - To do this, they need **information**.
- Technology can facilitate learning.<sup>1</sup>

## WHAT?

### Literature review

- Literature shows psychological factors, e.g. lack of self-motivation<sup>6</sup>, disappointment aversion<sup>3</sup>, anxiety<sup>3</sup>, optimism maintenance<sup>3</sup>, belief investments<sup>3</sup>
- Literature on information avoidance in healthcare focuses on cancer.

### Research questions

- RQ1. Why may people avoid data and information about their diabetes?
- RQ2. What types of information about diabetes are avoided and used?
- RQ3. Which diabetes information channels are avoided and used?
- RQ4. How can digital diabetes information-channels be improved to get higher uptake?
- RQ5. What are the effects of adolescence on diabetes-related information behavior?

### Empirical work

- Semi-structured interviews with
  - up to 10 young adults with diabetes
  - up to 5 diabetes healthcare professionals.

## FINDINGS SO FAR

### Healthcare professionals

- Lack of time to help with patients' data- and information-gathering

### Young adults with diabetes

- Adolescence can be very problematic.
- Few gather all data and information:
  - Some 'know it all'.
  - Some say some information is irrelevant, and other information is just wrong.
  - Some don't want to consider possible complications - 'they're too depressing'.

**Analysis is ongoing!**

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

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