

Case Study Activity: Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith is a retired 69-year-old man with a 5-year history of type 2 diabetes.

Referred by his family physician to the diabetes specialty clinic, Mr. Smith presents with recent weight gain, uncontrolled diabetes, and foot pain. Today he has a visit with the nurse practitioner (NP).

Sylvia, the care manager is assigned to Mr. Smith to help him arrange any appointments he might need and answer any questions he might have. After seeing the nurse practitioner, Mr. Smith meets with Sylvia.

In speaking with Mr. Smith, Sylvia learns that he does not test his blood glucose levels at home, and expresses doubt that this procedure would help him improve his diabetes control. “What would knowing the numbers do for me?” he asks. “The doctor already knows the sugars are high.” Mr. Smith states that he has “never been sick a day in my life.”

While talking with Mr. Smith, Sylvia also learns that Mr. Smith has been having trouble sleeping, has had some recent drinking binges and “sometimes does not want to get out of bed or talk to anyone.” Mr. Smith’s daughter recently died of a heroin overdose.

Although both his mother and father had type-2 diabetes, Mr. Smith has limited knowledge regarding diabetes self-care management, and states that he does not understand why he has diabetes since he never eats sugar. In the past, his wife has encouraged him to treat his diabetes with herbal remedies and weight-loss supplements, and she frequently scans the Internet for the latest diabetes remedies.

During the past year, Mr. Smith has gained 22 lb. He has never seen a dietitian, and has not been instructed in self-monitoring of his blood glucose.

The NP has given him a prescription for a blood glucose meter and test strips, a referral to the diabetes educator who will show him how to use the blood glucose meter, and a referral to the registered dietician. She has asked him to make a follow up visit with her in one month.

Mr. Smith also has a diagnosis of high blood pressure. The NP started him on medication to control it, and asked him to start checking his blood pressure between visits if possible. The NP suggested there might be a place in his town such as a senior center or drugstore where he could check it for free but Mr. Smith is unsure where he might do this.

Exercise: As a group, identify the main issues in the scenario. After your group has identified the issues, brainstorm, discuss and decide how, as care managers, you would approach and resolve barriers faced by the patient and how you can facilitate him receiving care. Remember, there may be more than one way to eliminate or reduce barriers faced by the patient

Adapted from: Spollett, G. , Case Study: A Patient with Uncontrolled Type 2 Diabetes and Complex Comorbidities Whose Diabetes care is Managed by and Advanced Practice Nurse, *Diabetes Spectrum*, Volume 16, Number 1, 2003