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## Real-time Continuous Glucose Monitoring: Implications for Pharmacists

**P**ART 1 OF the CGM live virtual crossfire series, titled **Best Practices for the Use of Real-Time Integrated CGM Across the Spectrum of Pharmacy Care** was presented on May 6, 2021. A panel of experts, moderated by **Stephanie Redmond, PharmD, CDCES, BC-ADM**, co-founder/co-CEO, Diabetes Doctor, discussed the role of real-time continuous glucose monitoring and the role pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have in optimizing diabetes management. As diabetes is a complex condition requiring multiple modalities in the



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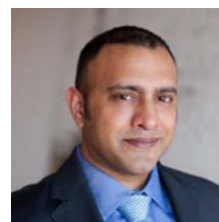
approach to monitoring and treatment, these expert panelists came together to discuss the importance of collaborative practices. **Diana Isaacs, PharmD, BCPS, BCACP, BC-ADM, CDCES, FADCES, FCCP**, clinical pharmacy specialist and remote monitoring program coordinator, Cleveland Clinic Diabetes Center, began the conversation by discussing the impact of diabetes on quality of life and the role of technology in optimizing diabetes-related health outcomes. Integrated real-time continuous glucose monitors (rtCGMs) have the unique capability of providing constant information about glucose level along with what direction it is heading at any given moment. While the HbA1c tells the average blood glucose over the past 2 to 3 months, Dr Isaacs explained the concept of time-in-range, the percentage of time where the glucose is in the target range, and the implications in guiding treatment and dietary decisions. This provides more information on glucose variability, beyond just an average.

The panel described the evidence behind the use of rtCGMs in various populations, such as persons with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, including intensive and nonintensive insulin users, as well as pediatrics and pregnancy. The recommendations about the value and utility of CGM put forth by the European Association for the Study of Diabetes and the American Diabetes Association Diabetes Technology Working Group were discussed. Taking the

discussion from evidence and guidelines to real-life practical occurrences, **Erin Shaal, PharmD**, senior director, pharmacy procurement, Albertsons Pharmacy, described how some community pharmacies have utilized an internal flagging system to help further identify patients who would be appropriate for rtCGM, and how pharmacists can proactively have conversations with patients around the role of rtCGM. **Samir Mistry, PharmD**, vice president, pharmacy external relations, Preferred-One, answered the question patients and providers often have regarding how to facilitate access and ensure a smooth process for insurance coverage with running test claims once a script is sent for patients with and without Medicare. Medical and pharmacy benefits may cover rtCGMs and supplies, and Dr Mistry stated that in many circumstances “most pharmacy benefits will cover rtCGMs and supplies for the patient, allowing [the patient] to fill their prescription right at the pharmacy.”



ERIN SHAAL, PharmD



SAMIR MISTRY, PharmD

Dr Shaal went on to add that community pharmacists have the opportunity to work alongside the patient, describing the directions on how to use a rtCGM device, providing insight on how to set alerts and alarms that tell a person when their blood glucose may be decreasing or increasing in real time, and interpreting the data that are generated. Being able to acquire rtCGM through the pharmacy helps create continuity of care. Patients can work closely with their pharmacist to get access, begin to properly use these devices, and interpret data from their rtCGM, which helps improve overall quality of life.

Embedded within the panel discussion were videos incorporating clinical vignettes that highlighted pharmacist and patient interactions about the role of rtCGMs in empowering the patient and examples of the discussion pharmacists will have with their patients about using the rtCGM. As Dr Isaacs emphasized, it is important for patients to know about rtCGM as a potential option. Throughout this discussion, Dr Redmond dynamically engaged the expert panel to share powerful patient experiences with rtCGMs, highlight the specific ways pharmacists within

various health care practices can identify and connect patients with this technological tool to closely manage their condition, and describe the impact rtCGMs have truly made on patient outcomes and quality of life.

Be sure to check out Part 2 of this live virtual crossfire series on June 22, 2021, where these panelists will continue the discussion and expand on the use of integrated rtCGMs in special populations, such as pregnancy, with patient cases, updates from the latest ADA meeting, and ways to improve the quality of life of patients with diabetes. ■