**Fighting Needle Fear in Diabetes Helps Compliance**

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Needle fear can complicate many doctor-patient relationships, but in the case of patients with insulin-dependent diabetes, fear of needles can become a serious barrier to compliance. Studies show that up to one-quarter of people with diabetes have needle anxiety (Diabetes Res. Clin. Pract. 1999;46:239-44), and that extreme needle phobia exists in about 1% of patients (J. Psychosom. Res. 2001;51:665-72).

If these issues are not properly addressed, they can lead to skipped doses and poor disease control, according to Dr. Mary Korytkowski, of the Montreal University of Pittsburgh, and director of its center for diabetes and endocrinology.

“I’ve had people tell me it takes them an hour to give the shot,” Dr. Korytkowski said in an interview. “They break out in a cold sweat, they just can’t face it, and they have to work themselves up to giving it.”

“For someone with diabetes to have needle fear, and then have to take four or five insulin shots a day, it’s a little bit of a challenge,” Dr. Korytkowski said. “That’s not whimsical, that’s very real.”

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return to going to college, and the parents were still giving the shot because the kids were so scared of it.”

According to Dr. Korytkowski, needle anxiety can arise not only in first-time insulin users, but also in patients in whom the injection route has become well established.

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that we have other injectable medications that people will accept them more readily. There's something specific about the insulin."

Chase then listed some reasons for the fear of needle injections:

1. Fear of infection
2. Fear of hypoglycemia
3. Fear of getting a cold
4. Fear of developing diabetes
5. Fear of developing diabetes

Chase also mentioned that the injection port is a method to improve the discreetness of injecting insulin.

In fact, Dr. Chase's group recently completed a study looking at the effect of reducing needle pain by fitting pediatric diabetes patients (aged 5-7 years) with a jet injector. This was a 12-week fixed-dose trial using 22 patients under 13 years of age. The study found that the jet injector reduced the pain of injection, making it easier for the children to use the device.

"The injection port is more convenient and less painful," said Dr. Chase. "It's a great improvement for children who have to inject insulin multiple times a day."

Dr. Chase concluded his presentation by emphasizing the importance of addressing needle phobia in children with diabetes. He stated that "by reducing the pain and discomfort of insulin injection, we can improve compliance and quality of life for these young patients."