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**Citation:** Mulligan, K., Lamontagne-Godwin, F., McBain, H. B., Haddad, M., Jones, J., Flood, C., Thomas, D. & Simpson, A. (2017). Diabetes care for people with severe mental illness: a survey of health professionals. *Diabetic Medicine*, 34(S1), p180. doi: 10.1111/dme.43\_13304

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Title: Diabetes care for people with severe mental illness: a survey of health professionals.

Kathleen Mulligan, Frederique Lamontagne-Godwin, Hayley McBain, Mark Haddad, Julia Jones, Chris Flood, David Thomas, Alan Simpson.

### **Background**

People with severe mental illness (SMI) such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder have a two-fold risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared with the general population and their outcomes are poorer than for people who have diabetes alone.

### **Aims/objectives**

To explore factors that influence mental health professionals' management of diabetes in people with SMI.

### **Methods**

A link to an anonymous online survey was distributed to staff working in NHS trusts and publicised through professional organisations and social media.

### **Results**

The survey was completed by 103 mental health nurses and 93 psychiatrists.

Management of diabetes in people with SMI was considered to be as important as managing their mental health by 92.7% of participants. The majority of participants saw it as part of their clinical role to provide advice about weight management (86.3%), general diabetes education (56.5%) and to check blood pressure (64.8%) but fewer reported it was part of their role to check cholesterol (41.3%), kidney function (33.6%), feet (16.1%) or to refer to retinopathy screening (12.6%).

Reported barriers to managing diabetes included lack of training and confidence, with only 41% feeling confident in managing diabetes and 59.1% feeling worried about doing so. Specific training in diabetes had been received by 31.6% of participants and 70.7% felt that they needed more training.

### **Conclusions**

Mental health professionals consider basic elements of diabetes management to be an important part of their role. Although they take responsibility for some aspects of diabetes care, they also report a need for more training.