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Facilitating Psychosocial Adaptation to Lifestyle Change in Spanish and English-speaking Elderly Mexican-Americans with Type 2 Diabetes, through a culturally-appropriate peer support-group mentoring system

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Introduction: The 2nd edition of the OT Framework justifies development of a community-based peer-support organization for people with diabetes. This presentation follows the 2006 World Congress presentation of an earlier quasi-experimental diabetes study. This funded experimental study compared usual care to peer group support programs for Mexican-Americans. The aim of the presentation is to describe the model and empowerment strategies for facilitating new habits and adherence behaviors in the elderly and subsequent evidence-based outcomes. Study Objectives were to compare the culturally-sensitive Bridges intervention program, with usual care. The Bridges Manual is similar to the Big Book used by the Alcoholic Anonymous organizations world-wide. Methods: Mixed methods used were EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN with randomization to 4 groups and discovery of QUALITATIVE themes from recorded focus group sessions. Outcomes were evaluated by questionnaires and HbA1C blood tests at pretest, 6 weeks, 12 weeks, 6 months and 1 year. Peer mentors who modeled good adherence were trained to facilitate the program. Mentees were subjects that received the structured manual + support group intervention. There were 42 Mexican-American subjects from low-moderate income, ranging from 60-80 years. Results showed $p < .05$ -.0001 levels of significance by General Linear Mixed Model Analysis. Focus group qualitative themes 1) Don't trust the system 2) Choice+ Control= Power 3) The Social Cost of Diabetes will be expanded. Conclusion: It was demonstrated that peer-mentoring structured program, provided the most beneficial intervention for elderly Mexican-Americans with type-2 diabetes. Contribution: Occupational therapists can have a new community role to facilitate development of organizations that empower positive self-care skills in people with diabetes, by providing consultation to peers leading the program. By fostering development of this organization world-wide, OT's could pave the path for future reimbursement for psychosocial occupational therapy community consultation in chronic disease. Bridges could one day be duplicated as a model for other chronic conditions, as Alcoholics Anonymous has been expanded by 150 organizations to deal with addictive behaviors. The findings imply a new role for OT in development of peer psychosocial support organizations for prevention of physical complications of this serious worldwide disease that has reached epidemic proportions.