

# USE OF PARENT CONSULTANTS IN A TELEHEALTH INTERVENTION FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN NEWLY DIAGNOSED WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES

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## ABSTRACT

Management of type 1 diabetes (T1D) in young children requires significant parent effort and parents often report feeling overwhelmed following diagnosis. The current study examined the use of a novel mHealth component, parent consultant (PC) contact via telephone, to augment an ongoing randomized controlled trial for parents of young children recently diagnosed with diabetes. Pilot data are available on the PC development and training process and from 13 parents randomized to the treatment condition.

Four out of 5 parents who were invited to serve as PCs completed a 4-hour PC training with our team. All PCs (100% female; 75% Caucasian) had children diagnosed with T1D at a young age (M age at diagnosis=3.72 years; M disease duration=4.87 years). Usage and satisfaction data were examined from 13 primary caregivers (100% female; 76.9% Caucasian) of children age 2-6 with T1D (M age=4.85 years).

The 13 participants randomized to the treatment condition were offered optional PC telephone contact (up to 4 contacts) to augment the intervention (5 telephone sessions with a research counselor).. All but one participant (92.3%) agreed to PC phone contact, and thus far, 7 participants (58.3%) have successfully connected with their assigned PC, ranging from 1-3 phone contacts. PC phone calls ranged from 16-60 minutes and covered a variety of topics including diabetes management, school concerns, nutrition, and sleep.

Satisfaction data suggest that use of a PC via an augmented mHealth strategy (telephone contact) is feasible, and can be a positive addition to behavioral interventions. Participants noted that PCs were 'extremely helpful,' with one parent commenting "I loved this"... component. Connecting with trained PCs with a shared history of parenting a young child with T1D may offer additional benefits to regularly used mHealth strategies by promoting parental adjustment to diabetes, quality of life, and child physical and emotional well-being.