

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION TOPIC: Diabetes in Schools: Empowering Teachers to Better Support Students

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Diabetes is one of the most common chronic health problems in the United States and is diagnosed in approximately 29.1 million Americans (American Diabetes Association, 2013). More than 23,000 children are diagnosed each year (American Diabetes Association, 2013). Managing this disease while attending school can be a daunting task for children with diabetes. Juggling class schedules, adjusting for cafeteria meals, and taking standardized tests while checking blood glucose, visiting the nurse's office, and taking water or bathroom breaks all become part of the school life of a child with diabetes. These factors then, too, affect the teacher who supports the student with diabetes. Teachers may feel more empowered if they better understand diabetes. Building knowledge about blood glucose ranges, diet complications and/or restrictions, necessary tools to manage the disease, and medical vocabulary are all components that would enhance their knowledge and could make them better prepared to work with a student who has diabetes. This study was designed to determine if supporting a professional development opportunity about diabetes empowered teachers to better support students with diabetes.

This mixed methods study consists of quantitative data derived through pre and post-survey results. Findings of significance are sought through the surveys. Qualitative data results

are gleaned from participant interviews. Patterns and themes are reviewed from the qualitative portion of the study to determine if the PD had any implications on the participants. Findings included that the PD opportunity did provide both knowledge and confidence gains in the participants.