Seema Qoronfleh

11/11/14

Controlling Type 1 Diabetes the Healthy Way

 People living with diabetes are prone to many other diseases. Maintaining blood sugars at steady and healthy levels is key to preventing many of these debilitating health problems; however, treating glucose levels can be very challenging. Challenges include stabilizing blood sugars once you have treated it. Having a simple treatment for diabetics is key to control. Diabetes control now is mostly done by paying close attention to blood sugars and exercise. Frequent hospital visits are also made where doctors may change certain aspects of control to help with getting to the ideal levels. These ways can be very difficult on someone and also very bothersome to the point where people may not want to take care of themselves. By using a simpler method like naturopathy, with treatments such as honey and black seed, people with Type 1 Diabetes will be able to regain that control easily and decrease the likelihood of health problems.

 Type 1 Diabetes, previously known as juvenile diabetes, is an autoimmune disease where the pancreas slowly shuts down and does not produce insulin anymore. Insulin is a hormone that is used to break down carbohydrates and sugars to maintain blood sugar levels (Dowshen 1). With insulin not being produced anymore in the body, people with diabetes must rely on taking insulin shots with every meal or being attached to an insulin pump which will pump insulin into the body regularly every day, every hour. With this disease blood glucose levels range from being extremely high to being extremely low. High blood sugars come from not having enough insulin in the body and low blood sugars are from too much insulin in the body or from the body’s sugars and carbohydrates being burned. A day in the life of a diabetic usually consists of constantly taking their blood sugar and correcting to lower the blood sugar if needed as well as having to wake up in the middle of the night to take their blood sugar to make sure that nothing is wrong and they are fine. The stress of having to control and maintain good blood sugars is immense. Constantly having to prick their finger and test their blood sugar level is not time consuming but it is burdensome. Working closely with a team of doctors in order to maintain control, exercising regularly, and eating healthy are some of the few ways type 1 diabetics care for their diabetes besides taking insulin.

 Noticing symptoms of diabetes is very easy. Some symptoms of diabetes are excessive urination, which comes from having to drink water all the time. When someone’s blood sugar is high they get very thirsty, thus causing them to drink a lot of water. People can end up waking up in the middle of them night due to their thirst and not get any sleep. Another symptom of diabetes is weight loss. Some people lose a lot of weight even though they are eating all the time. Also, extreme fatigue is another symptom. This may come from lack of sleep but also high blood sugars cause fatigue. Slow healing cuts or bruises are also a sign of diabetes, especially on the feet. Blurry vision is also another symptom of diabetes because diabetes can affect the eyesight from high blood sugars (Dowshen 2).

 Diabetes affects every part of the body, even though it is only one organ that does not work. Having terrible management over diabetes can lead to other diseases and complication for the future. Mostly high blood sugars are the cause of these complications and health problems. Some health issues that will occur with uncontrolled diabetes is becoming blind from the effect of high blood sugars destroying part of the eye. Skin problems are also very common with low level of control as well as rotting teeth. Other organs can get affected by diabetes like kidneys and liver, which can cause the person to have to go on dialysis. For diabetics their feet are very precious because the feet are the slowest to heal, and therefore, when their feet get injured it may not even heal, leading to an amputation (Derrer 1-2). Nerve damage is also a very common health complication; this is called neuropathy. More than half of the diabetics in the world have some problem with nerve damage. Due to these issues it is even more important to have good control over the diabetes.

 Having control over diabetes helps keep the body healthy and helps immensely with managing it. Managing diabetes is no easy task; a lot of work is put into making sure everything is under control, hence many doctor visits and excessive blood sugar checking. It is very important due to the previously stated reason to not only avoid future health problems but also be able to live life to the best of their ability. Also, it is our duty as Muslims to take care of the body that Allah (SWT) has given us and by taking care of it to the fullest to avoid damaging it.

 Taking care of diabetes is very difficult, even though it has gotten easier over the years with insulin development and the use of insulin pumps. Still, it is hard. With all the tasks as a diabetic it makes it burdensome and more like a job than a simple task. No one wants to wake up at midnight to take their blood sugar and have to stay up to make sure it goes back to a safe range or deal with the constant hassle of taking it. Also, having to always remember to take insulin whenever you eat is also tiresome. With foods nowadays being full of carbohydrates and fat it makes it difficult to sometimes estimate how much insulin to take or what someone’s levels are at. What people do not understand is that it is more mentally difficult then actually having to do the work. It drains a lot of energy and takes a toll on one’s mind when they are unable to complete the requirements and think that they are unable to take control over their diabetes. This is why it is important to find an easier way to help manage diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes treatment today is a lot of work and trouble, the most important thing being keeping blood glucose levels under control, preferably below 120 mg/dL and above 70 mg/dL. Glucose is a sugar that comes from the foods we eat and is stored within the body. It is the main source of energy for many of the cells and is carried throughout the body in the blood. Glucose gets into the cells with the help of the hormone called insulin. Diabetics use blood sugar monitors called glucometers to test glucose levels and give insulin or eat according to the number shown. By keeping blood sugar levels within the healthy range, diabetics will feel better and help themselves by reducing the risk that can develop from not taking care of diabetes later. Testing blood sugar levels is the only way to know how someone is doing with diabetes control.

 Due to the fact that there is no cure for diabetes, diabetics must stay as healthy as possible by following the treatment given for the rest of their lives. There are about 5 main things every diabetic must do everyday: take insulin every day, test their blood sugar, eat a healthy, eat balanced diets (some must stick to a meal plan), and finally exercise (Dowshen 3). Because type 1 diabetics are no longer able to make insulin in their bodies, they must inject it into the body whenever they eat. Currently, there are only two methods of getting that insulin into the body and that is by injections or by being on an insulin pump. Diabetics are unable to take insulin orally because of the acids in the stomach that would break down the medicine.

 There are many different types of insulin and each is used for a different purpose; most diabetics that are on shots take around 2 different types of insulin, while those on the insulin pump only use one. For diabetics it is important to make sure to give the correct amount of insulin, for if someone were to give too much they would end up going low and if they took too little they would go high. Along with taking the correct amount of insulin it is important to also have the correct diet, whether that be by a meal plan provided by the doctors or just eating the right types of foods.

 Diabetics must balance the food they eat along with the correct amount of insulin they take and their activity level. This is because certain foods and certain activity can cause fluctuation in blood sugar levels. Blood sugar level also can go up after eating certain foods depending on the type of nutrients within the food. The three main types of nutrients found in foods are carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, which all provide energy for people (Dowshen 2). Foods containing carbohydrates, such as bread, cause blood sugar levels to go up the most, whereas foods that contain mostly protein and/or fat, such as meat or eggs, do not affect blood sugar levels as much.

 Because the foods they eat can have such a great effect on diabetics, what can be done to help with management is finding new ways to help control diabetes, especially blood sugar levels, through their diet. Once you have control over the blood sugars, managing the rest will be, easier. Finding healthier ways would be ideal due to the health benefits that would come with it, such as using naturopathic treatments like herbs with medicinal features.

Naturopathy’s roots mostly come from Germany and was researched more in 19th and 20th century. It’s roots come from the latin translation “nature healing”. Naturopathy is based on the belief that the body has the ability to heal itself through natural ways. Different forms of naturopathy include homeopathy, acupuncture, and herbalism. Naturopathy is a medical method of healing ailments using traditional practices and modern therapies. It mostly aims for the body to be able to heal and support itself through these healing methods. Although using this method is mostly safe and healthier it is not wise to rely strictly on naturopathic methods, as needing modern medicine may be needed like in the case of type 1 diabetes. Naturopathy also encourages exposure to sunshine, herbs, organic foods, and exercises such as meditation and relaxation. Doing this allows the body to restore its ability to heal itself and build a stronger prevention against illness. For example honey and black seed both have a lot of medical features that would help other parts of the body including helping with diabetics (Ather et al. 1-3).

Honey has a plethora of benefits that will help someone become healthier and stronger and type 1 diabetics in particular. For one, honey is a quick sugar source: if a diabetic were to have a low blood sugar, the quick shot of honey will enter their blood faster, raising the blood glucose level. Because honey has antibacterial properties it can help protect and repair any damaged tissue, in a diabetics body the tissues and nerves become vulnerable to the high amounts of sugar in the body destroying tissues, nerves, and causing slow healing (Derrer 1).

Only certain types of honey can do this depending on potency and harvest. One type of honey, known as Manuka Honey, is applied mostly for burns, minor wounds but is also used with diabetes, cancer, and infections (Nazario 1-3). Honey contains many antioxidants as well which helps in the prevention of ulcers, that can develop in the feet, and cancer due to the peroxides. Peter Molan, a director at the University of Waikato, in New Zealand said, “All honey is antibacterial, because the bees add an enzyme that makes hydrogen peroxide” (2012). Due to this property it allows the honey to be used medically. Not only does honey heal but it also replenishes nutrients that have been lost because it carries lots of vitamins and minerals (Herrington 1).

Due to honey being filled with sugars, it acts as a quick and easy way to treat low blood sugar levels. When blood sugar levels drop, it is important that a quick acting sugar such as honey is taken right away to stabilize it. If left untreated, a diabetic can go into a diabetic shock. Coming up with a healthier alternative to other unhealthy candies is important, as people are getting more and more unhealthy. Therefore, using honey as an alternative is great, as it also comes with other benefits.

 Similarly, black seeds also have many medicinal properties that can help a person become healthier. Black seed is commonly found in Egypt and grows inside a pod in order to get them out of the pod water that must be poured over it. They must do this because of a certain chemical black seeds have in them called crystalline nigellone. Black seed helps with colds by allowing the body to be able to absorb medicines faster. It also opens up clogs in the body and helps relieve the body of accumulating gas and fluids. Black seed, when ground, mixed with honey and warm water will help with kidney stones. It also helps with women who are breastfeeding and a woman's menstruation. Mixing black seed with vinegar, heated up, and placed on the stomach will help with treating worms. Black seeds help with breathing, toothaches, and tumors (“Health Benefits of Black Seed” 1) All in all black seed has many properties that will heal a person of their problem.

In addition to these overall benefits, black seed also helps with absorbing the glucose in the intestines and helps to improve glucose levels in diabetics. Nigella sativa helps reduce the damage to cells in the pancreas, which is the organ that produces the insulin. This also might help lower the risk of diabetes (“Health Benefits of Black Seed” 1). Thymoquinone (compound found in the Nigella sativa) that is in black seeds can help in the prevention of people developing type 1 diabetes and it also increases the sensitivity of insulin in the liver. Black seed also has an antioxidant in it that might protect the cells in the pancreas from many harmful effects (Pulugurtha 1).

 In Islam, Muslims are supposed to take care of their bodies due to the fact that it does not belong to us but God, and taking care of one’s diabetes and making sure to get the best care one can get is vital. It is stated multiple times in Hadith books that honey and black seed are two of the best healing medicines. It is narrated in Bukhari, Book 76 Hadith number 7:

A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, "My brother has some Abdominal trouble." The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him "Let him drink honey." The man came for the second time and the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him, 'Let him drink honey." He came for the third time and the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Let him drink honey." He returned again and said, "I have done that ' The Prophet (ﷺ) then said, "Allah has said the truth, but your brother's `Abdomen has told a lie. Let him drink honey." So he made him drink honey and he was cured.

Also, narrated by Bukhari, Hadith number 11, it is stated that there is healing in black seed except for death.

 These two Hadiths show that it is possible to help take care of one’s self through the consumption of black seed and honey. Especially since it has been proven Islamically, there is no reason to reject the usage of these two items and instead put them into everyone’s normal everyday diet. Diabetics would gain a lot from it, not only for their diabetes but also for the rest of their body, making it stronger, healthier, and survive longer. Honey and black seed are the best natural method in helping control diabetes: not only is it healthy, but it is delicious and Islamic, too.

Works Cited

American Diabetes Association (2014, February 20). *Herbs, Supplements, and Alternative*

*Medicine.* Retrieved from <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/medication/>other-treatments/herbs-supplements-and-alternative-medicines/

Ather, A., Calabrese, C., Zick, S., Weber, W., & Standish, L. (2012, March). *Naturopathy: An Introduction.* Retrieved from <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/naturopathy/naturopathyin> tro.htm

Derrer, D. (2013, May 27). *The Risks and Complications of Uncontrolled Diabetes.* Retrieved from http://www.webmd.com/diabetes/risks-complications-uncontrolled-diabetes

Dotson, B. (2014, January 16). *Honey and Cinnamon for Diabetes Treatment.* Retrieved from

 http://[www.livestrong.com/article/507279-honey-cinnamon-diabetes-treatment/](http://www.livestrong.com/article/507279-honey-cinnamon-diabetes-treatment/)

Dowshen, S. (2013, July). *Type 1 diabetes: How is it treated?* Retrieved from <http://kid> [shealth.org/teen/diseases\_conditions/growth/treating\_type1.html#](http://shealth.org/teen/diseases_conditions/growth/treating_type1.html)

Herrington, D. (2012, August 22). *10 Health Benefits of Honey*. Retreived from <http://www>. care2.com/greenliving/10-health-benefits-of-honey.html

Natural Food Benefits. (n.d.). *Health Benefits of Black Seed.* Retrieved from

 http://[www.naturalfoodbenefits.com/display.asp?CAT=5&ID=128](http://www.naturalfoodbenefits.com/display.asp?CAT=5&ID=128)

Nazario, B. (2012, December 17). *Manuka Honey: Possible side effects of Manuka Honey.* Retrieved from <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/manuka-honey-> medicinal-uses?page=3

Pulugurtha, S. (2013, October 24). *Black Seed and Diabetes.* Retrieved from <http://www.live> [strong.com/article/528545-black-seed-and-diabetes/](http://strong.com/article/528545-black-seed-and-diabetes/)

Sahih Bukhari. Book 76, Hadith 7