24 April 2024, Cairo, Egypt – A Therapeutic Patient Education Expert Workshop held on 21–22 April made significant advances towards developing a regional curriculum for therapeutic patient education (TPE) on diabetes management.

A diverse group of regional and global experts came together at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean in Cairo, Egypt, to engage in rigorous review sessions, working groups, and plenary discussions. These exchanges were critical in refining the curriculum components.

Participants included endocrinologists, dieticians, health education specialists and public health experts, as well as people with lived experience of diabetes. Also present were colleagues from WHO headquarters, the WHO Regional Office for Europe, and the WHO Collaborating Centre on Therapeutic Patient Education in Geneva.

About therapeutic patient education

TPE is a structured, organized, person-centred learning process. It is defined as educational activities essential to the management of a pathological condition, with the activities managed by health workers trained in the education of patients.

The process is designed to help a patient (or a group of patients and their families) manage their treatment and prevent avoidable complications, while maintaining or improving their quality of life.

TPE is of particular importance. It is a cornerstone and essential part of the treatment and long-term management of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Coordinated and patient-centred approaches are used to manage NCDs, in line with the patient's needs, resources, environment, values and preferences.

Purpose and progress

The Therapeutic Patient Education Expert Workshop discussed a draft curriculum to guide a training of trainers in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, with a focus on people living with diabetes. The aim is to empower patients to better manage their condition themselves.

TPE can enable patients to make informed decisions, cope with the daily routines of complex chronic illness, change their behaviour, and monitor their illness daily. It allows patients to improve their knowledge and skills, not only about their illness but also their treatment. This helps bring about a better quality of life, greater compliance with therapeutic treatment, and a reduction in complications.

Training materials and pilot phase

The discussions at the workshop highlighted the necessity of TPE in diabetes management and also pave the way for next steps. These include the development of supportive training materials, like facilitator guides and participant manuals.

Moreover, the use of digital health tools was among the significant topics covered at the workshop. These could offer future directions to implement the curriculum more effectively. The next step is to finalize all material and begin piloting the TPE training of trainers curriculum in a few countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

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