Resilience, stress and perceptions of school based support of young people managing diabetes in school.

Rationale
- The incidence of Diabetes diagnoses has more than doubled since 1996, rising from 1.4 million to 2.9 million (Diabetes UK, 2011).
- Resiliency factors that mediate both positive and negative outcomes for those in some vulnerable groups have been widely researched. However, there has been a lack of research focusing on understanding the resilience of groups of children and young people managing both chronic health conditions such as Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) and their daily lives.

Aims-
This study investigated:
1. The personal strengths and good qualities students believe they have and use to look after their T1D in school.
2. The types of support or help from others which students think is useful for managing their T1D and completing their school work.
3. What personal strengths and school support help students when things are viewed as busy or stressful.

Method
- A mixed method study design.

Phase 1- Quantitative
- **Participants-**54 students aged between 11-16 years of age with T1D from across 31 London secondary schools.
- **Measures-**The three questionnaires completed looked at participants' personal strengths, support they get in school for their T1D and if they had experienced any stress recently.
1. Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents (RSCA) (Prince-Embury, 2007).
2. Revised How is School Going Survey (adapted from Lehmkuhl & Nabors, 2008).
3. Perceived Stress Scale-10 (adapted from Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983)

Phase 2- Qualitative
- The RSCA data was used to select 6 participants (with high, average or low scores) to complete semi-structured interviews to further explore perceived personal resilience, school based support and coping with stress.

Conclusions and Implications
This research highlights the importance of key adults and other professionals like Educational Psychologists in supporting students to:
- Develop their understanding of their T1D.
- Identify their personal strengths to help improve managing their T1D and school life.
- Identify, monitor and review valued support in school.
- Be aware of stress and ways of reducing it.

Main Findings
Phase 1-Correlational Analysis Findings
a) A positive relationship between students' personal strengths and how satisfied they were with the support they got for the T1D in school.
b) A negative relationship between students' personal strengths and their experience of stress.

Phase 2-Thematic Analysis
- **Personal Strengths/Resources-** Participants identified characteristics such as determination, being active and a sense of humour as personal qualities which helped them manage their T1D.
- **Understanding of what it means to have T1D-** Student's perception or thoughts about what it means for them to have T1D was very important in how they managed their condition.
- **Support in school that is helpful-** Participants valued support for their T1D that was clear, based on a good understanding or appropriate training on T1D and that they could rely on when unwell.
- **Help with school work or educational tasks-** All participants reported that the help they got from friends, teachers and named medical staff for their T1D was what they needed in class to feel well and complete their school work appropriately.
- **Experiences of stress and managing T1D as well as coping with stress-** Participants were able to recognise how stress can impact on their T1D. Participants highlighted that their own personal strengths and the support they got from others helped to overcome stress or difficult times. Speaking to others was viewed as really helpful.

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