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More on Patient Education: Use of Microcomputers

Recently Korhonen et al. concluded that to achieve long-term improvements in diabetic control, educational programs must lead to changes in attitudes and motivation.¹ In order to motivate patients, the educational experience must be flexible and responsive to their needs and abilities. We must appreciate that resistance to learning demands alternative methods of teaching.² Microcomputers can provide an alternate approach to patient education; an approach particularly well suited to the younger patient.

Microcomputers can be used as an effective adjunct in teaching the principles of diabetic control. A micro can provide visual reinforcement in the office as well as the home. In conjunction with the clinician, it encourages the patient to actively participate in managing his or her diabetes in an entertaining and informative way.

At present micros are underutilized in patient education despite their low cost and widespread availability. Soon, many new computers and programs will be developed for personal use, including programs that will offer diabetes instructions.³ This vital medium has the potential of evolving into a valuable asset in patient education. Clinicians are encouraged to use this resource in motivating and educating their patients.

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