What Most Concerns Patients about the Impact of Diabetes and Its Treatment on Their Ability to Drive?

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Objectives

Many people diagnosed with diabetes will seek or currently hold a driving licence, which may be essential for work, family and social activities. The complications of diabetes and its management can adversely affect people's ability to drive, with economic and quality of life (QoL) consequences. We sought to explore how far social media posts from a publicly available forum might allow us to understand how these factors affect the lived experience and concerns of patients.

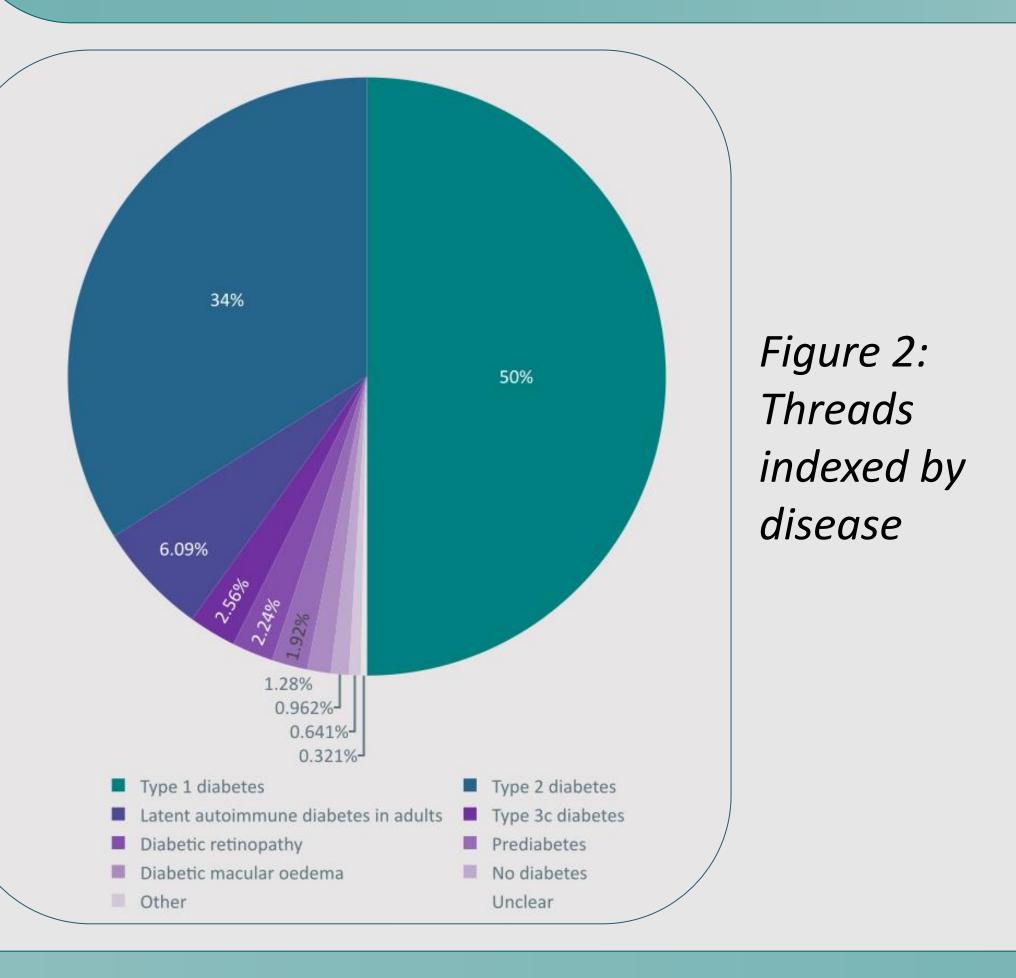
Methodology

- A sample of 180 Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) threads from a diabetes forum in the UK accessed on 08/12/2023 were assessed using an Evidence Mapper tool (www.evidencemapper.co.uk).
- Threads were indexed by fields including disease, intervention, topic and sub-theme. Sub-themes were then grouped into themes and then main themes.

Disease-specific concerns about driving Impaired QoL **Medication and driving** Fear of loss of job/income "I was prescribed Gliclazide yesterday but I simply wouldn't manage if "The DVLA strike the fear of god into me particularly as I'd lose my license was taken away I'm really scared now what should I do?" the job I loved if I lost my license!' Eyesight and driving "I...recently had laser and anti veg f treatment for both of my eyes i have macular "I have to renew my Drivers licence...Ive had no issues that would effect it getting renewed oedema...I recently went to specsavers for a dvla test and I am now fearing that the DVLA but ive been unable to see my Diabetic Doctor for more than a year' will revoke my licence." Hypoglycaemia and driving "To loose my license due to this would really be the end for me. I have "I've been a type 1 diabetic for 30+ years, and have never thought about suicide a few times more so recently. had a hypo that needed outside help until a few weeks ago...I'm now worried I won't get my licence renewed!" pact on daily living "Is it worth me even trying to get a car **Driving restrictions** "GP just told me not to drive. Help" Dissatisfied with licensing Offering advice/sharing knowledge "Thank you all for responding-I really appreciate all the help in making the if diabetic drivers in the UK think it's crazy that they have to jump through all these hoops, they're absolutely right. I can't fathom why the UK has the decision on what is too high a blood glucose reading to drive.' system they do for diabetics." Confusion around licensing/insurance Positive experience "I have actually been type 1 for nearly 7 years and have only very recently found 'I declared that I had 1 x hypo where I required assistance. To my surprise out that somebody in my position would need to apply for a 3 year licence." my new licence arrived today. 1 week. I am so happy and surprised.' Unmet need for licensing Positive impact on self and others

Results

- Most of the discussion described confusion about the process for interacting with the DVLA and obtaining medical clearance for driving.
- Disease-specific concerns were mainly around the impact of hypoglycaemic events, especially related to the use of insulin and gliclazide, on the legal ability to drive. Concerns about impaired visual acuity were less frequent.
- Impaired QoL was commonly linked to fear of loss of job/income; depression, discrimination and stigma associated with driving restrictions; and necessary lifestyle changes/sacrifices.
- However, the forum also provided valued advice/sharing of knowledge with others.



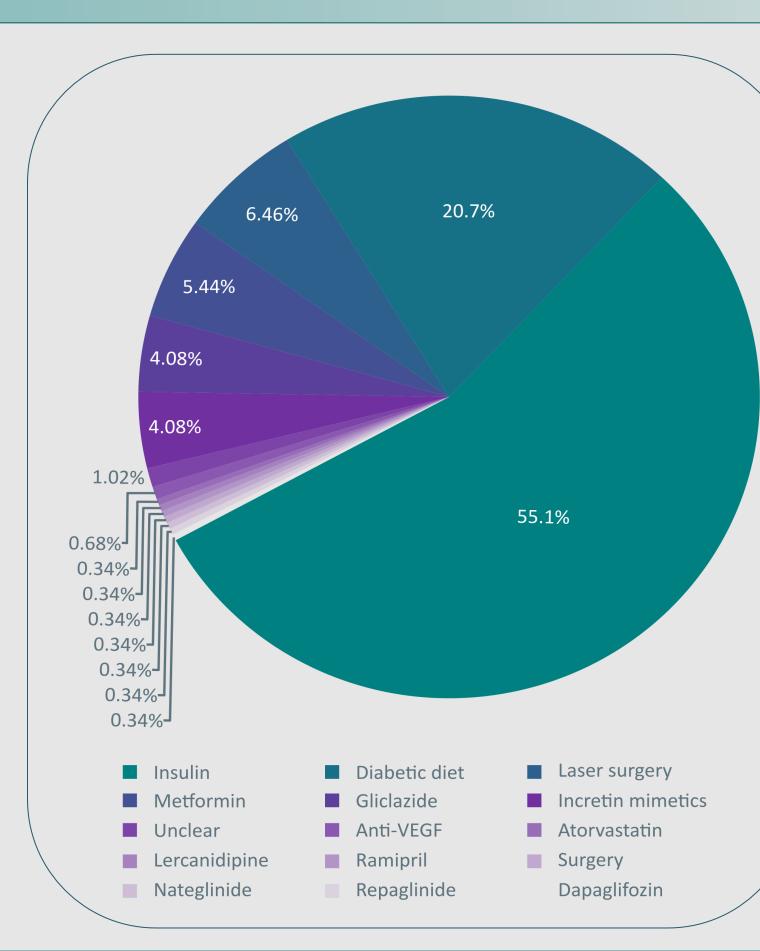


Figure 3: Threads indexed by intervention

Figure 1: Main themes (green), themes (purple) and examples of corresponding patient quotes

Conclusion

- Antidiabetic medication that minimizes the need for insulin therapy and avoids hypoglycaemic attacks is likely to be valued by patients who need to be able to drive.
- Patients also have an unmet need for better guidance on the driving approval process.
- The diabetes forum provided a quick and economical way of accessing views of patients on this specific topic and provides a good starting point to identify issues that most concern patients, which can be explored in more detail via traditional outcomes research.



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