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## Improving diabetes self-management via group care for rural medically underserved families

**Carolynn A DeSandre**  
University of North Georgia, USA

Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects more than 25 million people in the United States. Despite numerous new pharmaceuticals and approaches to successful blood glucose maintenance, the number of adults being diagnosed with diabetes continues to rise in the US. Medically underserved adults are at particularly high risk for developing complications from diabetes due to their lack of access to healthcare and consistency in care and monitoring of diabetes. This study used a group care method to attempt to improve self-management of diabetes in a group of rural, medically underserved adults in Appalachian Georgia. Unlike previous group care models which were targeted to clients diagnosed with diabetes, this study expanded the group care to include a medically underserved adult diagnosed with diabetes and a significant other adult residing in the same home. This approach was used in hopes of improving self-management of diabetes outside the rural healthcare setting by involving an additional adult family member in the care and education. A mixed methods approach was used to collect data and results revealed a remarkable improvement in overall diabetes self-management, weight loss and glycemic control in both the client diagnosed with diabetes and the significant other. In addition, the study revealed a change in belief about diabetes and locus of health control in the face of a chronic disease in study participants.

### Biography

Carolynn A DeSandre has completed her PhD in Human Development and Family Science in 2014 from the University of Georgia in Athens, GA. She is currently serving as the Assistant Dean of the College of Health Sciences and Professions at the University of North Georgia in Dahlonega, GA. She is a certified Nurse Midwife and Family Nurse Practitioner for over 15 years and her primary focus has been serving the medically underserved. She currently practices part-time in a rural north Georgia federally qualified health center. Her research interests have centered around family beliefs about health and wellness and the propensity to develop chronic disease, especially in medically underserved and rural populations. In addition to her clinical work and academic responsibilities, she takes students on health mission trips to both Uganda and Bolivia annually to serve the medically needy and to improve critical thinking, global health awareness and cultural sensitivity in health science students at all program levels.

carolynn.desandre@ung.edu

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