Study Develops New Tool for Managing Diabetes in Underserved Populations

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In a series of studies featured recently in the journal Diabetes Care, Dean Schillinger, MD and his team reported success in developing and evaluating an automated telephone self-management support system to reduce diabetes-related health inequalities in vulnerable populations.

The Improving Diabetes Efforts Across Language and Literacy (IDEALL) study showed that by using an automated telephone call system that reaches out to patients in their native language, communication issues caused by limited literacy and English proficiency are reduced and patients' health improves. The results are so impressive that a local Medi-Cal health plan partner, the San Francisco Health Plan, is making this tool available to its members with diabetes. Dr. Schillinger is Director of the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations based at San Francisco General Hospital, a research center carrying out innovative research to prevent and treat chronic diseases such as diabetes. In April 2008, Dr. Schillinger was also named Chief of the California Diabetes Program in the California Department of Public Health, a UCSF-administered program funded primarily by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Since nearly 3 million Californians have diabetes and approximately 1.4 million classify themselves as either Latino or Asian American, Dr. Schillinger’s research may provide a cost-effective way to help improve health outcomes for those living with diabetes in these population groups and others. [ IDEALL Fact Sheet ] [ UCSF Today article ] [ UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations ] [ CA Diabetes Program ] [ NBC Interview ] [ Fresno Bee ]

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