BRIEF COMMUNICATION

# Euphrodasiac Patient Education: Therapy Through Thoughts, Wellness Through Words

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## ABSTRACT

Therapeutic patient education (TPE) is the foundation of chronic disease management. TPE is a therapeutic intervention in itself, and is also an adjuvant to pharmacological therapy and lifestyle modification. Backed by evidence and experience, TPE has been shown to improve glycemic control, quality of life, and overall health. This article highlights the need to focus on TPE as a major facet of overall therapy. "Euphrodasiac patient education" can offer treatment through thoughts, and wellness through words. If we are able to inculcate this in chronic care, we should be able to kick start a virtuous cycle of euphoria, or happiness, in the health care ecosystem.

**Keywords:** Therapeutic patient education, TPE, chronic disease, adjuvant, metabolic control, euthymic euglycemia, glycemic happiness, Euphrosyne

Therapeutic patient education (TPE) is a well-established approach to chronic disease management[1]. TPE is not only an adjuvant to pharmacological therapy and lifestyle modification: it is a therapeutic intervention in itself. Backed by evidence and experience, TPE has been shown to improve metabolic control, quality of life, and overall health.

## EDUCATION, COUNSELING, AND SUPPORT

The words education, counseling, and support, though often used interchangeably, have distinct meanings. Education is defined as both the act of imparting knowledge to others, as well as the act of receiving knowledge from someone else[2]. Education, if offered without what we term as VAT (value-added therapy)[3], will be just as meaningful (or meaningless) as an insulin prescription, shared without explaining injection technique.

This discussion brings up the concept of counseling, which means giving advice[4]. Counseling, along with teaching, represents a better way of sharing TPE, and achieving desired results. At times, the educator or nurse may offer support[5], i.e., assistance or confidence, to weather the challenges and demands of living with chronic disease. Support can be logistic (for example, explaining how to get economical supplies of insulin) or emotional (as in discussing how to handle bullying at school or discrimination at work).

## EXPRESSION OF EMPATHY: WORDS OF COMFORT

Adding an element of support to teaching and counseling improves the quality and impact of TPE. This construct of care, however, is still incomplete. The person living with chronic disease, who accesses the health care system, desires (and deserves) empathy along with education. This can be accomplished by ensuring a humane approach to communication.

Such a need has been acknowledged and addressed by experts. Language matters[6] is a multinational project, which focuses on the right words to use while conversing with persons living with diabetes. This campaign highlights the appropriate way to speak and discuss about diabetes care. The phrase 'words of comfort'[1] highlights the need to having a comforting demeanor (as opposed to sympathy), while counseling and educating persons with diabetes. The same philosophy applies to management of chronic heart, lung, kidney, and oncologic disease.

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## EUPHRODASIAC EDUCATION

All these facets of TPE contribute to well-being and satisfaction of persons living with diabetes. We can go one step further, however, to improve the support, counseling and education that we share with them. We term this approach as 'euphrodasiac patient education'.

Euphrosyne is the Greek goddess of good cheer, joy and mirth. The term euphoria, or feeling of intense excitement and happiness, is derived from her. We suggest the word 'euphrodasiac' to define a substance or intervention that increases happiness. In our context, euphrodasiac education refers to a method of sharing education in a manner which promotes happiness.

Euphrodasiac patient education builds upon these earlier models of chronic care, by expanding the scope and spectrum of TPE, enhancing the responsibility of the diabetes care team, and establishing a "higher" standard of care.

For euphrodasiac education to be a reality, the health care team needs to promote happiness through their communication. This can be done by ensuring happiness in beliefs, in thoughts, in words and in action. The concepts of euthymic euglycemia[7] and glycemic happiness refer to this as well. Euthymic eumetabolic health and renal eudemonia are extensions of this.

## SUMMARY

Euphrodasiac patient education offers therapy through thoughts, and wellness through words. If we are able to inculcate this mindstyle in our work, we should be able to kick start a virtuous cycle of euphoria, or happiness, in the entire health care ecosystem.

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