



Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH)

Café Scientifique Series: “How Much Is Enough? Testing your blood sugar in type 2 diabetes”

Presented by:

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Background:

CADTH is a not-for-profit agency funded by federal, provincial, and territorial governments. We deliver advice and evidence-based information about the effectiveness of drugs and other health technologies to health care decision-makers.

In 2009 CADTH released recommendations that were somewhat controversial about the practice of self-testing of blood sugar by patients with type 2 diabetes. CADTH hosted a national series of *Café Scientifique* events to disseminate our work and to give patients and health care providers a chance to have their say about the recommendations. A *Café Scientifique* is an informal ‘town hall’ where a panel of experts speaks briefly, followed by questions, comments and opinions from the audience.

Campaign Components:

- Series of free events across Canada
- Promotional posters and newspaper ads
- Take-away handouts showing local usage and spending on test strips
- Educational / behaviour change tools
- Casebook of lessons learned and formal project evaluation
- Webpage: <http://www.cadth.ca/cafe> (redesign in progress)

Target Audiences:

Our two primary target audiences were patients living with diabetes and their caregivers, as well as the health care providers who treat patients with type 2 diabetes. Health care providers included family physicians, pharmacists, nurses, diabetes educators, dietitians, and other specialists. Other target audiences included decision-makers in health organizations (hospitals, long-term care facilities) and policy decision-makers.

Objectives:

Generally, the *Café* project aimed to “change the diabetes management story” and create opportunities for thoughtful reflection and peer-to-peer discussion about self-testing of blood sugar in patients with type 2 diabetes. The project also had specific objectives to:

- Raise awareness about CADTH’s recommendations among target audiences.
- Demystify the ‘facts and myths’ behind the recommendations and how they were developed.
- Engage patients in discussions that directly affect the care they receive.
- Bring affected audiences together in one room (providers and patients).
- Create opportunities for discussion about the scope of diabetes self-management and the concepts of sustainability and value for money in the Canadian health care system.

Execution:

The *Café* project was launched in February 2010 with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). Based on the success of four ‘pilot’ events, funding was extended to bring these events across Canada. In each city one CADTH expert and two local diabetes specialists made up the panel of experts – this brought local flavour and context to the discussions. CADTH advertised in newspapers and partnered with local professional associations, health care institutions, and advocacy groups in each city to promote the events to target audiences. The events were audio or video recorded and will be posted online, so that others can access these discussions.

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Results:

Over 500 patients and health care providers attended the 12 *Café Scientifique* events. As a result of what they learned at the events:

- 67% of patients said that they were likely to discuss their testing regimen with their doctor.
- 40% of health care providers indicated that they will change how they manage their patients with type 2 diabetes not using insulin.

In British Columbia, the discussion at the *Café* helped the Ministry of Health develop a slogan for its educational program on self-testing. In Toronto, a panellist incorporated CADTH's research and recommendations into an educational workshop on diabetes delivered through the provincial pharmacy association. CADTH has also received requests for evidence or more information from people who attended the events.

Overall Integration:

CADTH's brand is about delivering credible, impartial, scientifically rigorous products and services to people who need it – health care decision makers and patients. The *Café* series helped to reinforce the brand and build greater awareness of the agency. Using the *Café* model to broadly share research findings and encourage behaviour change is a relatively new concept. As a result the *Café* series, CADTH is now among leaders in this area of knowledge exchange.

Lessons Learned / Advice for Others:

A *Café Scientifique* can help you build the brand of your organization, capture the interest of your audience, and call them to action. Some lessons learned are:

- Know what you want to achieve before you start (or you won't be able to measure success).
- Find local champions who will 'own' the event and enthusiastically support and promote it.
- Select a 'hot topic' – some controversy piques interest.
- Don't be surprised if the discussion goes 'off topic' – it's an open forum and anything can happen.
- Dedicate the appropriate resources to this project or it won't be a success.