

# 1 **Is diagnosis of type 2 diabetes a “teachable moment”? A qualitative study**

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11

## 12 **Abstract**

### 13 **Aims**

14 To explore the potential of a type 2 diabetes diagnosis to be a “teachable moment”.

### 15 **Methods**

16 Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 23 participants (10 people with type 2 diabetes, 13  
17 relatives of people with type 2 diabetes) in Scotland, UK. They explored cognitive, emotional and  
18 behavioural changes following diagnosis of type 2 diabetes in oneself or in a relative. Data were  
19 analysed using Framework approach.

### 20 **Results**

21 Strong emotional responses are not always related to the occurrence of a teachable moment. Risk  
22 perception and outcome expectancy were found to be teachable moment factors for patients with  
23 type 2 diabetes and their offspring, but not their partners. Change in self-concept increases the  
24 likelihood of type 2 diabetes diagnosis to be a teachable moment for patients but not for relatives. In  
25 some cases, type 2 diabetes is perceived as incompatible with current roles thus hindering diabetes  
26 self-management. Relatives often engage in caring for patients and “policing” their behaviour but  
27 did not report perceived changes in social roles.

### 28 **Conclusions**

29 The study suggests that diagnosis of type 2 diabetes is a teachable moment for some patients and  
30 their relatives. These findings have implications for interventions to address diabetes self-  
31 management in patients and primary prevention in their relatives.

### 32 **Keywords**

33 Type 2 diabetes; teachable moment; patients; relatives; interviews

## 34 **Introduction**

35 Diagnosis of illness can be a teachable moment when people adopt spontaneous behaviour change.  
36 The teachable moment construct is underpinned by existing conceptual models [1-3] and suggests  
37 that naturally occurring health events (e.g. illness diagnosis) increase people's motivation to respond  
38 positively to educational messages and adopt new behaviours. McBride et al. [4] propose a model  
39 suggesting for a health event to be a teachable moment it needs to i) increase peoples' perceptions  
40 of personal risk and outcome expectancy ii) prompt an emotional response and iii) produce a  
41 redefinition of social role or self-concept (although it may not have to fulfil all three conditions).  
42 However, this model was developed in cancer and smoking cessation and the majority of empirical  
43 work on teachable moments has been in cancer, a potentially terminal condition [5-7]. In addition,  
44 previous work in cancer suggests that illness diagnosis may also trigger behaviour change in the  
45 patient's relatives [8-11]. However, it remains unclear whether the teachable moment criteria  
46 suggested by McBride et al. [4] are applicable to other long-term health conditions.

47 The current study applies the concept of the teachable moment to type 2 diabetes. Previous  
48 research shows that people may perceive diabetes to be less serious than cancer [12]. Although  
49 some studies suggest that diagnosis of type 2 diabetes may prompt behaviour change [13-15], no  
50 previous studies have directly explored the potential of the diagnosis to be a teachable moment for  
51 patients or their relatives. The patients' relatives represent a group at increased risk of type 2  
52 diabetes due to shared genetics in first-degree relatives [16] or shared lifestyle in partners [17]. One  
53 recent study applied the teachable moment construct to gestational diabetes, but perceived risk  
54 may be greater in this context, as it also relates to the baby's health and well-being [18].  
55 This study explores the relevance of McBride et al.'s [4] model to people with type 2 diabetes and  
56 their relatives. More specifically, it aims to identify whether people experience increase in perceived  
57 risk and outcome expectancy, strong affective response and redefinition of social role or self-  
58 concept in response to diagnosis of type 2 diabetes in oneself or a relative.

## 59 **Methods**

### 60 **Study design**

61 Ethical approval for this study was granted by the University of Stirling, School of Health Sciences  
62 ethics committee (7th Oct. 2015, SREC 15/16, Paper No. 37, version 1).

63 This was a qualitative study, conducted in Scotland (UK) that explored people's cognitive, emotional  
64 and behavioural responses to diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.

65 Study information is reported according to COREQ guidelines [19].

### 66 **Recruitment**

67 This study used non-probability convenience sampling [20]. Recruitment was carried out through  
68 community outreach in Forth Valley, Scotland. Posters and flyers explaining the study were placed in  
69 109 community locations, such as community centres, libraries, charity shops, bowling and golf  
70 clubs, post office branches and the University of Stirling. Diabetes UK advertised the study on their  
71 website, newsletter and social media pages. The study was also advertised by word of mouth.

72 Interested participants were invited to contact the researcher. They were screened for eligibility  
73 based on the following criteria: 1) over the age of 18 years; 2) able to speak and write in English; 3) a  
74 recent diagnosis of type 2 diabetes in oneself or a relative. The word “relative(s)” in this article is  
75 used to refer to any first-degree family member or partner (whether married or not) of someone  
76 with type 2 diabetes. Time since diagnosis was not specified in the inclusion criteria as type 2  
77 diabetes is a chronic condition and people’s perception of what constitutes a recent diagnosis may  
78 differ. If a participant was eligible to take part, they were asked to nominate one or more non-  
79 diabetic relatives who might be willing to take part in the study (or nominate the relative with  
80 diabetes if it was the relative who got in touch). The participant was then asked to provide their  
81 family member with the study flyer and the researcher’s contact details.

## 82 **Data collection**

83 Interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate data collection method to explore people’s  
84 experiences, views and motivations [21]. Semi-structured face to face or phone interviews were  
85 conducted with people with type 2 diabetes and/or their relatives. Before the interview, participants  
86 completed a demographic questionnaire. The interview schedule was developed based on previous  
87 literature [4, 22]. The full interview schedule is displayed in Box 1.

88 *Insert Box 1 about here*

89 Members of the same family were not always interviewed together, due to participants’ availability.  
90 In some cases, only one member of a family was able/willing to take part. It was decided not to  
91 exclude people whose family members were unable to take part because the study did not aim to  
92 explore discrepancies in the views of people from the same family. Participants were given £10 as  
93 reimbursement for their participation. The interviews were conducted by a female researcher (EDD)  
94 with training and experience in collecting qualitative data. Data collection continued until data  
95 saturation was reached in terms of sampling criteria and perceived depth and relevance of  
96 information collected. In order to avoid data redundancy, saturation was deemed to have been  
97 achieved when no new data emerged.

## 98 **Data analysis**

99 The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and checked against the recordings for  
100 accuracy. Field notes were not used as part of data analysis. All information was anonymised and  
101 participants were given study numbers. Data were analysed using Framework Approach, which  
102 requires the researcher to stay close to the original data in order to “capture, portray and explain the  
103 social worlds of the people under study” (p.279) [23]. This provides systematic and clear stages to the  
104 analytic process [24]. Such transparency ensures trustworthiness of data as it allows others to see  
105 how the final themes were developed and explore their relevance to other contexts. Analysis  
106 followed Spencer et al.’s [23] steps, which include familiarisation, constructing an initial framework,  
107 indexing and sorting, reviewing data extracts, data summaries, developing categories, mapping  
108 linkages, and providing explanations and interpretations. The interview questions were initially used  
109 to guide data analysis, after which data analysis adopted a more inductive approach. Data analysis  
110 was conducted by using Microsoft Excel.

111 Analysis was conducted by the primary author. Another author with extensive experience in  
112 qualitative research (VS) reviewed the data analysis stages to ensure that the final themes emerged  
113 from the data.

114 In order to provide participants with feedback on the outcome of the study they have contributed  
115 to, a lay summary of findings was disseminated to all people who took part in the interviews.

116 *Insert Table 1 about here*

117

## 118 Results

### 119 Participants

120 Forty two people showed interest in the study and 23 took part in 17 semi-structured interviews  
121 (10 patients, 13 relatives: 7 offspring, 1 mother, 5 partners) between November 2015 and March  
122 2016. Thirteen of the interviews were individual and four included the patient and their relative(s).  
123 Relationships included two families (father, mother, two daughters; father, mother, daughter); a  
124 mother-daughter dyad; and three couples. The remainder were either a patient or a relative whose  
125 family member with diabetes was unable to take part. Interviews lasted between 25 and 85 minutes  
126 and took place in participants’ homes (N=6), private rooms at University of Stirling (N=6), a local  
127 hotel (N=1), a local library (N=1), a private office at a participant’s workplace (N=1), and over the  
128 phone with the researcher in a private room (N=2).

129 The characteristics of participants are presented in Table 1.

### 130 Interview findings

131 During the developing categories stage of data analysis, two groups of patients emerged: patients  
132 who adopted behaviour change immediately after the diagnosis of type 2 diabetes and patients who  
133 took time to adjust to the diagnosis. People were placed in the first group if they talked about  
134 specific changes in their behaviour. People were placed in the second group if they talked about  
135 needing time to come to terms with the diagnosis, struggling to accept what it meant and relying on  
136 others for diabetes management. We made the assumption that diagnosis was, by definition, a  
137 teachable moment for those patients who attempted to change their behaviour immediately after  
138 diagnosis but not for those who needed time to adjust. The comparison of perceptions and  
139 behaviour changes between these two groups enabled the exploration of McBride et al.'s [4]  
140 suggestion about necessary attributes of a teachable moment.

141 Two groups of relatives also emerged: people who adopted behaviours believed to prevent type 2  
142 diabetes and people who did not adopt such behaviours. People were placed in the first group if  
143 they reported specific changes they had made to their behaviour. Again, we made the assumption  
144 that diagnosis was, by definition, a teachable moment for these relatives. People were placed in the  
145 second group if they reported no change in behaviours, known to prevent type 2 diabetes, thus  
146 suggesting the diagnosis was not a teachable moment for them. By comparing the perception and  
147 behaviour changes between these two groups we were able to explore McBride et al.'s [4] teachable  
148 moment factors.

#### 149 [Affective response](#)

150 Diagnosis of type 2 diabetes often provoked an emotional response. All participants, both  
151 patients and relatives, talked about experiencing strong emotions including shock, relief, anger,  
152 sadness, disappointment or fear, although there were differences in the way people responded to  
153 their emotions. In some patients the surprise at diagnosis receipt evoked fear:

154 *"In the first month of thinking I had this and then being diagnosed around that time, I did*  
155 *struggle to sleep on three or four occasions, thinking about dying and having this kind of*  
156 *strange intrusive thoughts, which is odd. I've never had that before in my life."* I3P2, patient

157 The surprise in other patients acted as a main motivator for behaviour:

158 *"A bit sort of shocked really, but surprised, you know, that was all really...and then to just find*  
159 *out more about it. That was it...just to see what I could do and what I couldn't do"* I2P1, patient

160 Some patients, who had symptoms of type 2 diabetes, expected the diagnosis and felt relief because  
161 the diagnosis provided an explanation for previous poor health and allowed them to *"know their*  
162 *enemy"* and make changes to control their condition:

163 *"I suppose initially I actually felt quite relieved 'cause I thought: well, I've not been well and I*  
164 *thought there is something I can do about this"* I13P7, patient

165 Some relatives also felt relieved because they did not perceive type 2 diabetes to be a very serious  
166 condition:

167 *"I wasn't entirely surprised. I was relieved that it wasn't anything, and when I say more serious,*  
168 *I mean that it's controllable and stuff like that."* I6R13, partner

169 It appeared that the people who adopted behaviour change immediately after the diagnosis and  
170 those who needed time to adjust experienced similar emotions.

### 171 Perceived risk and outcome expectancy

172 Patients, who adopted behaviour change in response to diagnosis, said they had always been aware  
173 of the potential complications that can result from type 2 diabetes. However, the diagnosis made  
174 these complications personally relevant and increased their perception of diabetes severity:

175 *"I already knew about certain complications, but it brings it more home to you when you've*  
176 *actually been diagnosed and you have to be wary of certain situations"* I14P8, patient

177 The increased perception of severity and relevance of complications prompted some people to  
178 consider the worst possible outcome of the current situation and consider type 2 diabetes as a  
179 potentially fatal condition. This increased motivation to change behaviour:

180 *"I guess I was a little bit frightened but it was more the idea that if I didn't sort it out then I*  
181 *wouldn't get, I have a little boy who is 2 and a half now, and I wouldn't get to see him go to*  
182 *school unless I did something."* I15P9, patient

183 These patients adopted behaviours they believed would reduce negative type 2 diabetes  
184 consequences (i.e. outcome expectancy). They talked about increasing physical activity, reducing  
185 carbohydrate and sugar intake, decreasing portion size and caring for their feet.

186 However, in the group of people who needed time to adjust and did not immediately make  
187 behaviour changes, perception of risk was increased but it was often associated with a period of  
188 denial and inability to make changes:

189 *"And I presume it's fairly common if not, close to 100% common that there is any kind of*  
190 *bereavement process, there is a period of denial in the beginning, isn't it? None of this can be*  
191 *happening to me, not really being able to process what's going on..."* I3P2, patient

192

193 Some of these patients also talked about relying on their relatives for diabetes management:

194 *"...if I do something that's gonna make it worse, I'd hope somebody either the doctor or a*  
195 *nurse or [wife] would point out that I was doing it..."* I6P4, patient

196 Similar to the patients, relatives considered the potential severity and impact of type 2 diabetes  
197 after it became personally relevant to them. However, offspring of patients appeared more likely to  
198 experience increase in perception of personal risk of type 2 diabetes and adopt risk-reducing  
199 behaviours. The use of words, indicating necessity (e.g. need, made), was apparent in offspring's  
200 accounts of behaviour change:

201 *"...before then [diagnosis] I was thinking: I'm fine, I don't need to worry about my life; but as*  
202 *soon as that happened [father got diagnosed] it was like: wait, what about if I am gonna get*  
203 *diagnosed, how's that gonna affect me in the future?; It's made me think sort of well ahead of*  
204 *what I should be. It's made me think: right, I need to do this, I need to do all this to stop myself*  
205 *from getting into that position. So it's kind of gave me a wake-up call as to stop myself from*  
206 *ever reaching that position"* I5R6, offspring

207 *"...bloody hell, everything seems to be mounting up that I've got a good chance of getting*  
208 *this..., so I need to make sure that I do as much as I can not to bring it on myself"* I12R11,  
209 offspring

210 Some relatives whose parent had type 2 diabetes acknowledged the fact that they might not be able  
211 to prevent type 2 diabetes. However, they chose to adopt protective behaviours to minimise the  
212 potential impact diabetes could have on their lives:

213 *"There is a risk that no matter how healthy we are, we can get it later on in life maybe at the*  
214 *same age dad got it so that, maybe you couldn't prevent it, but can certainly try and have a*  
215 *healthy lifestyle so when it does happen you have already got better controls already in place*  
216 *to deal with it if it does happen but if people are just unhealthy generally, I suppose you could*  
217 *prevent it by being healthier and not getting it in the first place."* I2R2, offspring

218 Partners did not appear to have experienced increased perception of diabetes risk. Many of them  
219 compared their behaviours to those of the patient and did not believe their own behaviour would  
220 lead to type 2 diabetes:

221 *"Well, I watch what you eat, you know...there are so many things that I wouldn't do from, you*  
222 *know, you put half an inch of what I think...and I can't eat, I couldn't eat a sandwich that you*  
223 *made without you taking the butter off it because you put on...you put more butter on a*

224 sandwich than I put cheese on it, you know...you have cream, custard and ice cream all  
225 together on your pudding and I would never do...I would want to vomit before I do that, so I  
226 think we are just brought up with very different attitudes to eating." I3R5, partner

### 227 Self-concept and social role

228 Patients who adopted behaviour change immediately after diagnosis, talked about changes in the  
229 way they perceive themselves (i.e. self-concept). They made a comparison between their behaviour  
230 before and after the diagnosis and evaluated their self-concept based on that:

231 *"I am extremely tired all the time whereas I was a woman before who wouldn't think twice of,*  
232 *just constantly being on the go, would never sit down. But now I am so tired, when I finish a*  
233 *day's work I am exhausted which is not like me at all. I've become somebody else"* I14P8,  
234 patient

235 Some of these people adopted specific behaviours they believed would help them maintain their  
236 pre-diabetes identity. The person below described falling asleep on the sofa as a "diabetic"  
237 behaviour, which they did not want to engage in:

238 *"I am having to go dog walking with my fantasy dog. To stop that falling asleep on the sofa*  
239 *'cause I think that's diabetic as well. I don't know if it is, but in my head it is."* I10P6, patient

240 In other cases, type 2 diabetes was an opportunity to redefine one's identity. Below is a quote from  
241 a patient who reported frequent overeating, which he believed contributed to the development of  
242 type 2 diabetes:

243 *"...To what extent is eating, especially now that I know the consequences, to what extent is*  
244 *that self-harm, you know...(...)it's deliberately destructive (...) there's a lot of questions like:*  
245 *How do I see myself and what is it about? And I think the diet...working out my identity with*  
246 *food, working out my relationship there, is part of a big thing for me in terms of how I see*  
247 *myself and the diabetes has definitely changed and I might be opening myself up to some*  
248 *unpleasant things about destructive behaviours and how I can duck relationships..."* I15P9,  
249 patient

250 Patients, who adopted behaviour change, also constructed their new identity by differentiating  
251 themselves from other people with type 2 diabetes. Some patients talked about the "good  
252 diabetic" versus the "bad diabetic" where the "bad diabetic" is a person who is overweight and  
253 who displays poor self-management:

254 *“But you see that with maybe some people with diabetes, when you look at it, it’s a*  
255 *stereotyping again, obviously quite fat and maybe they don’t look after themselves right either*  
256 *but they get the type 2 diabetes and I think maybe they’re expecting some miracle medication*  
257 *to cure it and then something will happen to their feet....”* I2P1, patient

258 In comparison, sometimes there was a struggle to accept the need to engage in diabetes-related  
259 behaviours, such as checking insulin levels, in the group of patients who did not make immediate  
260 changes:

261 *“I think I’ve been on a bit of an emotional rollercoaster as well in terms of...being numb,*  
262 *avoiding it for a bit and trying to let it sink in and trying to work out how to manage the fact*  
263 *that...I was used to feeling fine and now I prick myself...getting into some kind of a routine...”*  
264 I3P2, patient

265 In some cases, diabetes was believed to be incompatible with patients’ social roles, primarily due to  
266 perceived stigma around type 2 diabetes:

267 *“I have a very high profile, high power job, leading people and...that stigma, I know, it will be*  
268 *in their mind...so I need to carefully think about that and manage that in the appropriate time”*  
269 I3P2, patient

270 This in turn presented difficulties in the management of the condition:

271 *“Can I do that [check insulin level]] in the car in the car park or to drive down the road, can I do*  
272 *it in the gents’ toilet, do I do it on my desk, all that kind of stuff”* I3P2, patient

273 *“If I went out for a meal with friends who don’t really know I am diabetic then I will just eat*  
274 *normally and adjust and take more insulin to cope with that”* I14P8, patient

275 With regard to relatives who adopted risk-reducing behaviours, there was no evidence that they  
276 experienced changes in their self-concept or social role. However, all relatives talked about changes  
277 in their responsibilities in terms of caring for the patient, cooking food that complies with the  
278 diabetes regimen and policing the patient’s behaviour. In spousal relationships, this sometimes led  
279 to changes in relationship balance:

280 *“I think probably the balance in our relationship has changed. I would probably see me having*  
281 *more of a caring role than I had before [diagnosis]”* I6R7, partner

282 In parent-offspring relationships, role reversal was observed where daughters adopted caring roles:

283       *“He’s [father with type 2 diabetes] doing okay, he struggles from time to time, I think he eats*  
284       *sweet packets so that gives me a reason to shout at him for it”* I5R6, offspring

285       However, there were partners, who did not believe to be at increased risk of type 2 diabetes, and  
286       who made a clear distinction between themselves and the person with diabetes. These people’s role  
287       in the house did not appear to have changed:

288       *“I mean I understand that, you know, what [wife]’s got, you know, I am quite happy to go*  
289       *along with it and if I need to pig out or something, I’m probably gonna do it.”* I13R12, partner

## 290       Discussion

291

292       This study explored the relevance of McBride et al.’s [4] teachable moment model to type 2  
293       diabetes. The study focused not only on people with type 2 diabetes but also on relatives of people  
294       with type 2 diabetes. Given that first-degree relatives and partners of people with type 2 diabetes  
295       may be at increased risk of developing the condition [16, 17], the study expands the teachable  
296       moment construct into primary prevention. Each of McBride et al.’s [4] teachable moment factors is  
297       discussed below in relation to the current study and previous research.

### 298       Affective response

299       The current study did not provide support for McBride et al.’s [4] suggestion that events that elicit  
300       strong emotional responses increase the likelihood of illness diagnosis to be a teachable moment.  
301       This is because almost every participant (patient or relative) reported experiencing strong emotions  
302       but these emotions evoked different responses. In some people emotions, such as shock and  
303       surprise, motivated them to adopt behaviour change. In others they led to denial and avoidance.  
304       Negative emotions, such as fear, have been shown to discourage behaviour change, especially when  
305       people are not convinced of their self-efficacy or the effectiveness of specific behaviours [25, 26].  
306       However, this finding is promising because it shows that diagnosis of type 2 diabetes triggers an  
307       emotional response and clinicians and researchers need to be aware of this when delivering  
308       interventions.

### 309       Risk perception and outcome expectancies

310       Patients whose perception of diabetes severity and susceptibility to negative diabetes-related  
311       consequences increased after diagnosis, were more likely to adopt behaviour change and were thus  
312       assumed to have experienced a teachable moment. This provides support for McBride et al.’s [4]  
313       model and previous models that suggest perceived risk increases the likelihood of adopting health-  
314       related behaviours (Health Belief Model [1], Common-sense model [22]). Outcome expectancy was

315 also a facilitator for behaviour change as these patients adopted specific behaviours to offset  
316 negative diabetes outcomes (e.g. reducing sugar intake and portion size). This supports McBride et  
317 al.'s [4] model and previous research showing that beliefs that specific behaviours would lead to  
318 specific illness-related outcomes are associated with changes in self-management [27-29].

319 With regard to relatives, diagnosis of type 2 diabetes appeared to increase risk perception mostly in  
320 the offspring, rather than partners, of patients with this condition, suggesting that type 2 diabetes  
321 diagnosis is more likely to be a teachable moment for this group. This supports previous research  
322 showing that first-degree relatives of people with type 2 diabetes may believe they are at higher risk  
323 of getting type 2 diabetes, compared to the general population [30, 31]. One explanation for this  
324 could be that offspring are aware of their genetic predisposition to type 2 diabetes while partners  
325 place greater emphasis on lifestyle factors and perceive their behaviour to be different from that of  
326 the patient. Previous research in type 2 diabetes and heart attack shows that although some people  
327 believe the illness runs in their family, they perceive their lifestyle to be different from that of the  
328 affected relatives [32, 33]. Offspring reported a perceived need to change behaviour and adopted  
329 specific behaviours to reduce their risk of type 2 diabetes (e.g. reducing sugar intake). This suggests  
330 that outcome expectancy may be a teachable moment factor for the offspring of patients.

### 331 **Social role and self-concept**

332 This study provides mixed support for McBride et al. [4] who suggest that changes in self-concept or  
333 social roles contribute to the potential of illness diagnosis to be a teachable moment. Patients, who  
334 changed their behaviour in response to the diagnosis thus suggesting diagnosis was a teachable  
335 moment for them, evaluated their self-concept and were either motivated to adopt strategies that  
336 would allow them to keep their previous self-concept or they welcomed the identity changes as an  
337 opportunity for the situation to improve. Disruption in identity and potential identity transformation  
338 following a chronic illness diagnosis have been demonstrated before [34-36]. In type 2 diabetes,  
339 Kneck et al. [37] found that newly diagnosed patients with type 2 diabetes evaluated their pre-  
340 diagnosis behaviours in order to decide which behaviours could be continued and which had to be  
341 changed. Many patients in the current study also wanted to avoid being perceived as a "bad  
342 diabetic", which motivated them to adopt behaviour change and comply with diabetes management  
343 guidelines. However, in some cases type 2 diabetes was perceived to be incompatible with current  
344 social roles. McBride et al. [4] suggest that people with lung cancer who smoke may have a sense of  
345 obligation to stop smoking to avoid stigma of non-compliance. However, in the case of type 2  
346 diabetes, there is perceived stigma that people are to be "blamed" for their condition [38]. This was

347 a barrier for self-management for some patients in this sample as they were reluctant to disclose  
348 their condition to friends.

349 Relatives in this study did not report changes in self-concept. Although many relatives supported the  
350 patient by changing existing responsibilities or adopting new ones, change in social role did not  
351 appear to be related to the experience of a teachable moment. Offspring talked about telling  
352 parents what to do suggesting a potential role reversal while partners expressed a need to “police”  
353 and care for the patient suggesting a shift in relationship balance. Similar changes in family roles  
354 following diagnosis of diabetes have been observed before, showing that women are more likely to  
355 adopt multi-caregiving roles [39].

### 356 **Implications**

357 The current findings have implications for management of type 2 diabetes in patients and  
358 prevention in their relatives. The suggested teachable moment factors can be incorporated into a  
359 brief diabetes intervention, delivered by healthcare professionals, such as diabetes nurse specialists  
360 (DNS). Nurse-led brief interventions have been shown to be effective for smoking cessation [40] and  
361 alcohol [41]. This could be facilitated by using the teachable moment communication process model  
362 (TMCP), which teaches clinicians how to capitalise on teachable moments in practice [42]. Routine  
363 diabetes appointments present an excellent opportunity for such interventions and also for  
364 prompting family communication about diabetes. Family communication around the teachable  
365 moments factors is key for optimising the potential of type 2 diabetes diagnosis to prompt behaviour  
366 change. Research has already indicated that adult offspring of patients with diabetes generally seem  
367 receptive to being informed via the family system about reducing their diabetes risk [43, 44].  
368 Additionally, the majority of patients recognise the necessity of disseminating risk and preventive  
369 messages in their family [30, 44, 45]. Whitford et al. [44] show that people who have spoken with  
370 their relatives with diabetes about diabetes risk were more likely to see themselves at risk of type 2  
371 diabetes, worry about diabetes and see diabetes as serious. Patients can be encouraged to bring a  
372 relative to their appointment with the DNS. The DNS can prompt communication about emotions  
373 and how they influence behaviour. In patients, particular focus should be placed on diabetes  
374 severity, as this can be an important teachable moment factor. Relatives would benefit from  
375 discussion around risk perception and this may be particularly important for partners who often do  
376 not view themselves at increased risk of type 2 diabetes. Families can discuss behaviours they can  
377 adopt together (e.g. changes in diet) in order to offset negative diabetes-related outcomes, thus  
378 addressing outcome expectancy as a teachable moment factor. Social roles, especially where these  
379 are incompatible with diabetes, need to be addressed so they do not present a barrier to self-

380 management. Similarly, discussion around adopting caring roles in relatives and the perceived need  
381 to “police” the patient, could provide a platform for further family communication about the needs  
382 of the patient and their relatives.

### 383 **Limitations**

384 The current study has several limitations. First, the convenience sampling did not allow for  
385 strategic recruitment where there is a good variety and sample members differ in terms of key  
386 characteristics [20]. Second, recruitment was carried out in one health board in Scotland. Regional  
387 differences in healthcare experience may exist and can influence psychological outcomes [46, 47].  
388 Finally, the study did not consider psychosocial characteristics and ethnic, racial and socioeconomic  
389 background, which have been shown to affect behaviour change [6, 8, 48-50].

### 390 **Summary**

391 The current study provides support for the idea that diagnosis of type 2 diabetes is a teachable  
392 moment. It shows that McBride et al.’s [4] factors (i.e. affective response, risk perception and  
393 outcome expectancy, self-concept and social role) are relevant to patients with type 2 diabetes and  
394 their relatives, thus expanding the teachable moment construct into primary prevention.  
395 Interventions need to be tailored to address individualised experience of potential teachable  
396 moment factors and encourage family communication around these factors.

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530

531

532 Box 1. Interview schedule

### **Setting the context**

Explain aim of the study and my role as a primary researcher

To the patient: We can start with you telling me how you got diagnosed with type 2 diabetes?

(Prompts may include: How did you feel when you found out?; How long after that did you tell your family?;

What about your friends?)

To the relative: Do you remember how you found out? How did you feel?

To both: Do you openly talk about type 2 diabetes in your family?

### **Changes in perceptions**

- Cause: What do you think causes type 2 diabetes? (Explore any changes in knowledge of causes since diagnosis)
  
- Identity: What do you think are the symptoms of type 2 diabetes? (Explore any changes in knowledge of symptoms since diagnosis)
  
- Severity: Tell me about what you think about the seriousness of type 2 diabetes? (Explore any changes in perceived diabetes severity since diagnosis)
  
- Consequences: What do you think are the consequences of type 2 diabetes? (Explore whether the patient has experienced any consequences and whether there are changes in perceived diabetes consequences since diagnosis)
  
- Timeline: How long do you think your type 2 diabetes will last? (Explore any changes in knowledge of diabetes duration since diagnosis)

- Control: To patient: What do you think about your ability to control type 2 diabetes? To relative: What do you think about prevention of type 2 diabetes? (Explore any changes in perceived diabetes control since diagnosis)

- Illness coherence: Do you feel like you understand type 2 diabetes? (Explore any changes in understanding since diagnosis)

To the relative: What do you think about your chances of developing type 2 diabetes? (Explore whether their perception of risk has changed since diagnosis in their relative); Are you worried about developing type 2 diabetes in the future?

**Changes in behaviour**

To the patient: Tell me more about your behaviour since diagnosis. Have you made any changes to your behaviour since you got diagnosed? (Prompt about specific changes in diet, exercise, lifestyle). Has it been easy? (Prompt around barriers to making changes)

To the relative: Have you made any changes to your own behaviour? (Prompt about specific changes in diet, exercise, lifestyle).Has it been easy? (Prompt around barriers to making changes)

To both: Can you tell me more about the ways the diagnosis has affected the way you see yourself and your social role? (Prompt around perceptions of oneself; accepted norms of behaviour; stigma; roles within the house and at work);How has T2D affected your relationship with your relatives?

To both: Do you think that diagnosis is a good time to speak with the patient’s relatives and tell them more about their risk of type 2 diabetes and the ways it can be prevented? (Prompt about why they think it would be a good time, or not).

533

534 Table 1 Participant characteristics

	<b>Patients (n=10)</b>	<b>Relatives (n=13)</b>
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<b>Duration of type 2 diabetes</b>	Range: 3 weeks – 18 months Mean: 7.9 months Median: 6.5 months	<b>Duration of diabetes in their relative with the condition:</b> Range: 6 weeks – 11 months Mean: 6.8 months Median: 8 months
<b>Route to diagnosis</b>	5 presenting GP with symptoms 3 periodic screening 1 visit GP for other reasons 1 after gestational diabetes	<b>Route to diagnosis for their relative with type 2 diabetes:</b> 2 presenting GP with symptoms 1 usual check up
<b>Relationships with patient</b>	Not applicable	6 daughters 3 wives 2 husbands 1 son 1 mother. 6 share genetics but live apart from patient 2 share genetics and live together 5 do not share genetics and live together
<b>Gender</b>	5 male 5 female	10 female 3 male
<b>Age</b>	Range: 37-71 years Mean: 53.6 years Median: 51 years	Range: 18-68 years Mean: 41.17 years Median: 45.5 years
<b>SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)<sup>1</sup></b>	Range: 2-10 Mean: 5.7 Median: 6	Range: 2-10 Mean: 6.92 Median: 6
<b>Education</b>	9 had education after high school (2 PhD <sup>2</sup> , 1 MSc <sup>3</sup> , 2 BAs/BSc <sup>4</sup> , 1 one year at	9 had education after high school (3 PhD, 1 MSc, 2 BAs/BSc, 2 college, 1 HND <sup>6</sup> , 3 current students)

	university, 1 Diploma, 1 Police promotion exam, 1 HNC <sup>5</sup> , 2 current students) 1 – high school education	4 – high school education
<b>Employment</b>	4 full-time 3 retired 2 unemployed 1 part-time	4 full-time 4 part-time 2 unemployed 1 self-employed 1 retired 1 other
<b>Relationship status</b>	8 in a relationship 2 single	12 in a relationship 1 single
<b>Family history of diabetes</b>	5 yes 5 no Number of relatives with diabetes: 1-4	8 yes 5 no Number of relatives with diabetes: 1-4
<b>How they heard about the study</b>	5 word of mouth (relative who took part or someone who saw advert) 2 University of Stirling portal 1 Diabetes UK newsletter 1 Falkirk Sensory centre 1 West Lothian Diabetes support group social media page	7 word of mouth (through patient who took part or someone who saw advert) 2 University of Stirling email 2 University of Stirling portal 2 Stirling council intranet

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536 <sup>1</sup>Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD): SIMD is used to identify areas of multiple deprivation  
537 in Scotland. It ranks small areas from most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 10)  
538 (<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>).

539 <sup>2</sup> PhD – Doctor of Philosophy

540 <sup>3</sup> MSc – Master of Science

541 <sup>4</sup> BAs/BSc – Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science

542 <sup>5</sup> HNC - Higher National Certificate

543 <sup>6</sup> HND - Higher National Diploma