

Lifestyle changes from online information among people with diabetes – the human factor still counts

Cross sectional studies



UiT The Arctic
University of Norway

Anne Helen Hansen^{1*}, Silje C. Wangberg², Eirik Årsand³, Tiki Celine Midthassel⁴

¹University Hospital of North Norway, and Department of Community Medicine, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

²Department of Health and Caring Sciences, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

³Department of Computer Science, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, and Norwegian Centre for E-health Research

⁴Department of Community Medicine, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

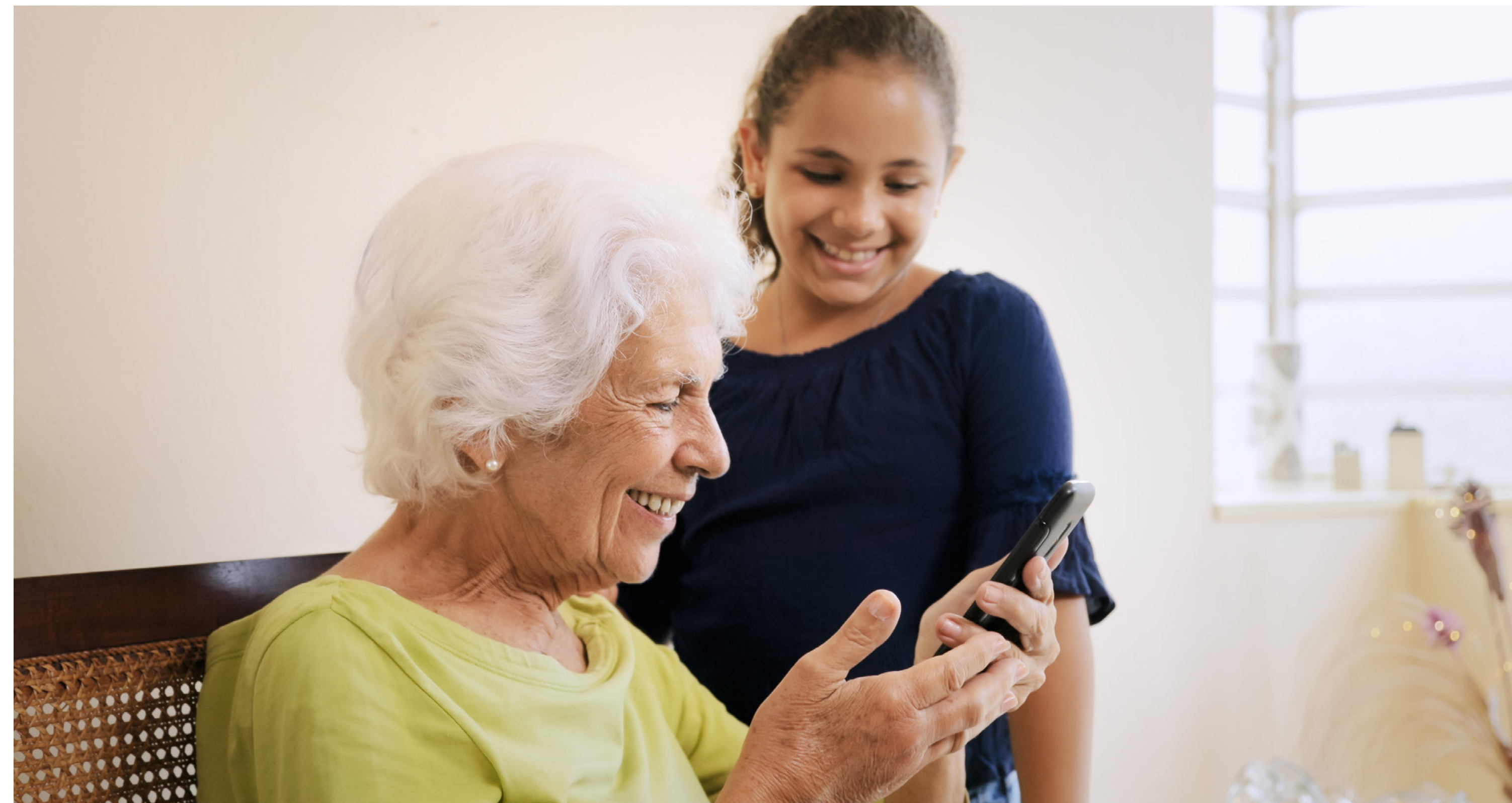
*Corresponding Author

Background

Lifestyle changes may reduce morbidity and mortality in patients with diabetes. Little is known about how experienced human support may relate to lifestyle changes after seeking lifestyle information online. Our objectives in two cross sectional studies were to assess the associations between lifestyle changes among people with diabetes based on online information, and human support achieved by participating in online groups or discussing the information with a doctor.

Methods

We used self-reported survey data from 1,250 members of The Norwegian Diabetes Association (18-89 years), collected in 2018. The first study included 540 respondents diagnosed with type 2 diabetes (T2D), while the second study included 847 respondents with type 1 diabetes (T1D) or T2D. By logistic regressions we studied the associations between self-reported lifestyle changes and participating in online groups or discussing the internet information with a doctor.



Results

In the T2D study, 41.9% reported lifestyle changes based on internet information, whereas 46.9% in the T1D/T2D study did. The odds of positive lifestyle changes were more

than doubled for those who had participated in online groups (T2D) (odds ratio [OR] 2.56, confidence interval [CI] 1.13-5.83) and likewise for those who had discussed information from the internet with a doctor (T1D and T2D) (OR 2.54, CI 1.90-3.40).

Conclusions

Lifestyle changes from internet information among people with diabetes are associated with online group participation and with discussing the information with a doctor. Online groups and doctors can play an important role in lifestyle changes additional to health-advice from the internet. The human factor still counts.

Keywords

Lifestyle changes, online support, diabetes.