

Technology and pumps

What are the psychological issues raised by using technology and how have psychologists addressed these?

- Use of CGM may increase anxiety, hypervigilance and stress initially in both parents and young people over blood glucose levels. It may also exacerbate difficulties within family dynamics due to increased oversight from others. Can trigger perfectionistic parenting and may impact on sleep due to frequent checking.
- Can be an overwhelming amount of data and new information for families, schools and healthcare professionals. This may result in no longer feeling an 'expert' in diabetes management.
- Media coverage can impact on expectations of technology and drive unrealistic views on the management of diabetes with technology.
- Technology can raise issues around the confidentiality of data due to wide variety of access (e.g., parents, teachers, team).
- Use of technology to manage high HBA1C however this does not address underlying factors of diabetes management.
- Motivation to engage with technology may not be sustained and may return to habitual patterns.
- Psychologists can feel placed in a position of power when providing pump assessments however this role should feel supportive.
- Identifying when someone may no longer be safe using technology (e.g., incorrect usage of pumps or risk issues) or when technology is significantly impacting on wellbeing (e.g., obsessive checking).
- Challenges of equitable access to technology.
- May impact on body image – having technology attached and increasing sense of diabetes visibility.
- Reductionist – a young person can be viewed as 'data' and has a digital self.
- Use of CGM's straight away may result in young person feeling less attuned to bodily sensations and more reliant on technology to identify changes.

- Importance of how technology is introduced in setting realistic expectations e.g., technology is not a 'one size fits all', Importance of insulin pumps being identified appropriately – pros/cons of injections vs pump. Giving people lots of information about pumps and opportunity to see and experience trial of them.
- Provision insulin pump assessments to identify barriers, address possible issues and support families to make an informed choice
- Joint working with CAMHS, particularly with supporting safety planning.
- Providing initial conversations with parents to help them understand how many CGM checks are appropriate and how to recognise anxiety.
- Providing support with parents on hypervigilance and anxiety.
- Suggesting pump holidays and returning to MDI for a short period of time (e.g., concerns around body image while on holiday).
- Providing psychoeducation on diabetes burnout and the unique challenges raised by technology (e.g., extra checking).
- Providing formulations in understanding safety behaviours and maintenance cycles of anxiety.
- Supporting young people and families with adapting to technology and to consider removing if detrimental to health and wellbeing.
- Use of social media (e.g., TikTok and Instagram) role models and famous people to support uptake of technology.
- Providing peer mentors can help to remove perceived pressure from professionals and offer valuable lived experience.
- Supporting neurodiverse young people to access technology through graded exposure.
- Address concerns about four year pump contracts and decreasing pressure on concerns technology use will be 'forever'.
- Suggesting privacy changes on who can view the young person's data.