Advancing in Incremental Steps or Taking a Quantum Leap?
Recording Family-Centered, Community-Based, Diabetes Reduction Project

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Objective
An intensive effort of volunteer multi-disciplinary personnel from an academic medical center, school of nursing, school of allied health, community and faith based agencies, and local, state and national associations targeted the reduction of culturally and family-based diabetes in one of the most medically disadvantaged areas of the country.

Setting/Participants/Resources
Ninety patients and their 'families' participated in this longitudinal study. They represent an area which has the highest rate of diabetes in the city, the highest rate in the state, which itself is the worst in the nation. The Department of Family Medicine recognizes that treatment in the traditional hospital based clinic is ineffective. Therefore, it seeks a new treatment model.

Methods
Three groups of 30 patients and their 'families' are included in the study. Subjects at a community clinic and a faith-based organization serve as treatment groups. The control is a medical center group. Everything was challenged. New innovations were explored and adopted. The team proposed interviewing (MI) techniques, developed special low-literacy materials, instituted 'one-stop shopping' local medical treatment, and offered the dissemination of electronic health information (EHI), and introduced electronic health records (EHR) while maintaining HIPAA guidelines to document this activity. This project explores a new paradigm, designed to enhance patient/medical staff cooperation, to provide the investigative staff the tools needed to be more efficient, and to increase patient compliance. Baseline testing established individualized performance markers. After personalized counseling and education, correlations were examined between patient responses to attitude questionnaires and scores on monthly exercise, nutrition, and medical check-ups. Aggregate scores for each group allow comparison between group performances. EHR expedited the process.

Results/Outcome
The study has produced effective communication models, responsive treatment regimens, specific measurable criteria, and effective teaching materials. It especially demonstrates the value of adopting technological applications along with new treatment modalities to effectively manage chronic diseases.