“Not a fear, just an occurrence now”: Qualitative feedback from adults with type 1 diabetes about the HypoPAST online, self-guided, psycho-educational program.

Background and aim: HypoPAST (Hypoglycaemia Prevention, Awareness of Symptoms, and Treatment) is a fully-online, self-guided, psycho-educational program for reducing fear of hypoglycaemia among adults with type 1 diabetes (T1D). This qualitative sub-study explored users’ views of the program, their experiences implementing HypoPAST strategies, and how HypoPAST affected their thoughts and feelings about hypoglycaemia.

Method: A 6-month, two-arm, parallel-group, hybrid type 1 randomised controlled trial, compared HypoPAST (intervention) to usual care (control). Trial participants were adults (≥18 years) in Australia, with T1D, fear of hypoglycaemia, and an internet-enabled computer/device to access HypoPAST. Participants were eligible for this qualitative sub-study if they were allocated to the intervention group and used 2 or more HypoPAST modules. Semi-structured, audio-recorded, telephone interviews (~30-45 minutes) were conducted at end-trial (≥24 weeks post-randomisation; September 2024 to May 2025). Interview transcripts were analysed inductively and thematically in NVivo.

Results: Of the 25 invited to interview, 18 (72%) participated (median age: 40 (range: 25-81) years; T1D duration: 15 (0-62) years; 11 women, 6 men, and one non-binary).

Participants viewed HypoPAST as a unique and flexible resource, due to its evidence-based, hypoglycaemia-specific, psycho-educational content and fully-online, self-guided format. They valued the embedded lived experience narratives throughout the program which helped to normalise their experiences. Participants took what they needed from HypoPAST. For example, they gave examples of how HypoPAST increased or refreshed their knowledge; assisted them to implement problem solving or reframe unhelpful thoughts leading to more effective hypoglycaemia management; and/or feel less anxious about or alone in experiencing hypoglycaemia-related problems.

Conclusion: HypoPAST fills an unmet need, in the form of a flexible psycho-educational program which supports adults with T1D to identify ways to manage hypoglycaemia and related fears. Participants took relevant information and strategies from HypoPAST and translated these into beneficial changes in their hypoglycaemia-related thoughts, feelings and behaviours.