



WEEKEND PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL GROUPS TO HELP FAMILIES BETTER COPE WITH DIABETES.

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Background and Aim:

Though the importance of providing psychological support for families as an integral part of diabetes care has – repeatedly - been highlighted, only a handful of such psycho-educational schemes are, currently, implemented in Spanish healthcare institutions.

To provide a service of this kind we propose that an innovative approach - consisting of weekend psycho-educational groups for families of children or adolescents with diabetes - be introduced.



Method:

4 fifteen-hour weekend-seminars on psychology in diabetes: participants were divided into 3 different psycho-educational groups, run by three clinical psychologists with expertise in diabetes care - one for parents of children <12 years, one for parents of adolescents and one for adolescents - with a final joint session.

Subjects:

- Diabetes onset in childhood;
- Diabetes in adolescence;
- Impact of diabetes in the family;
- Parent and child behavior;
- "Letter to My Diabetes";
- Daily problems and strategies applied in solving them;
- What you would ask your parents/child.

The program for the adolescent group also included a 3-hour sports session, run by an expert in sports and diabetes.

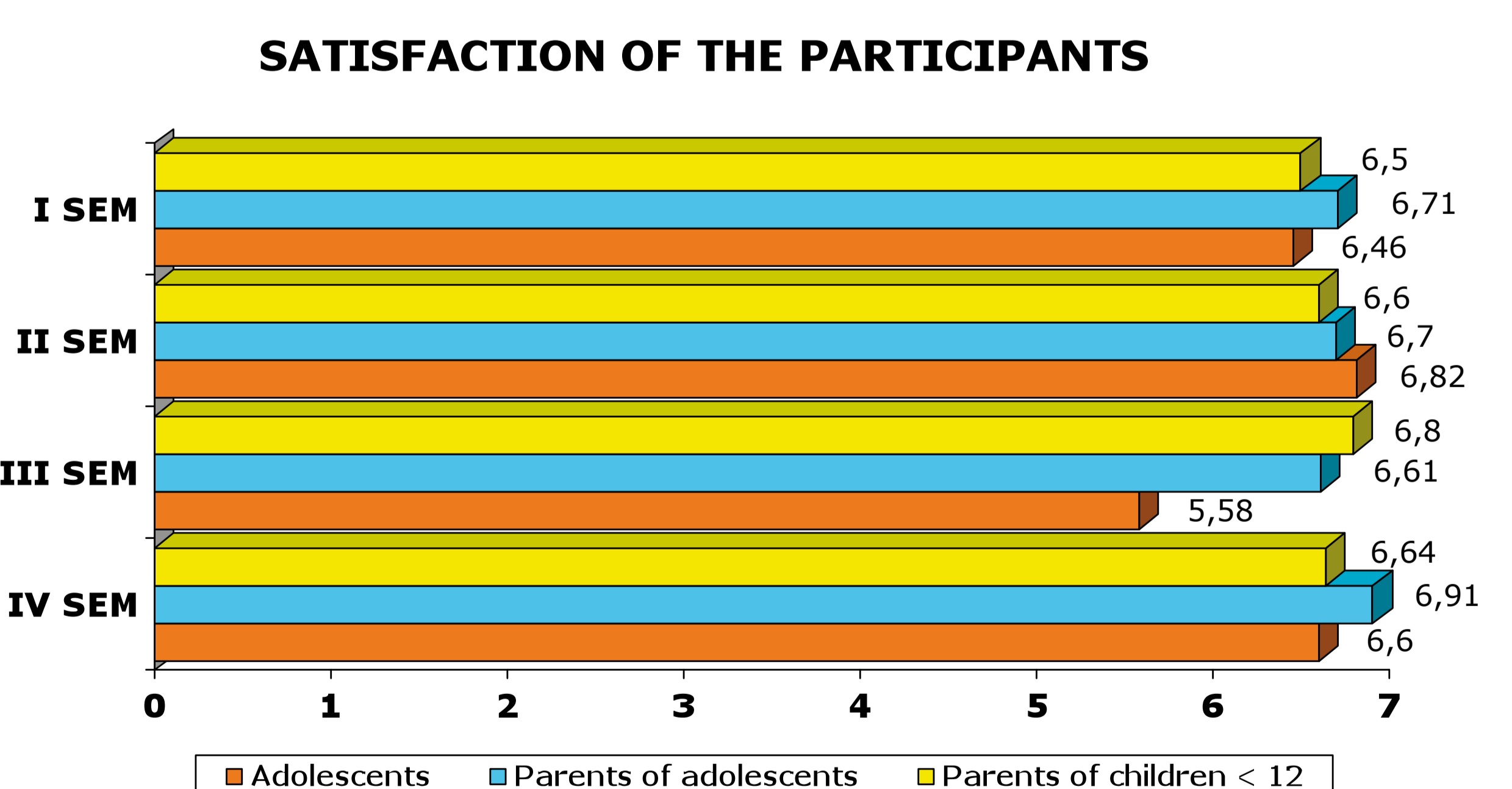
Parents of children aged 0-18, from all over Spain, were invited by diabetes associations and www.fundaciondiabetes.org; the events were organized by Fundación para la Diabetes.

Results:

The 141 parents (56 fathers, 85 mothers) and 46 adolescents who took part in the workshops meant that, all four weekends, were at 100% capacity.

After the seminar, participants completed a 10-item survey (item range: 1-7) to assess satisfaction levels regarding seminar content.

Participants from each of the 4 weekends rated the psycho-educational groups very favorably.



Conclusions:

- Demand for psychological seminars by parents in Spain is high.
- Program content, organizers and speakers have all received very high marks.
- Weekend psycho-educational groups give parents a chance to meet other parents, thus enhancing mutual support among families who face similar experiences.
- Psychological support should be made a standard therapeutic component.

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