

Insulin Pen—The “iPod” for Insulin Delivery (Why Pen Wins over Syringe)

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Abstract

Diabetes affects most aspects of everyday life and places considerable responsibility on the patient; therefore, without patient acceptance of what we offer, the therapy is unlikely to be adhered to especially when that therapy happens to be insulin injection. In 2008, almost every physician/health care provider carries new and sleek cell phones (because the newer ones are well designed and function better). Why these same providers continue to prescribe insulin via syringes in 2008 is something that I cannot fathom. Previously, some insurance companies only paid for vials and there was no other choice, but today almost all insurance pay for pens and so the “insurance reason” is no longer tenable. Since Banting and Best discovered insulin in 1921, scientists have continued to improve the types of insulin (making them mimic physiology more closely in order to minimize hypoglycemia and improve glycemic control as seen with the latest analog insulins). In the same manner, the delivery process of insulin has also continued to evolve to make it easier and more acceptable to patients. Studies have shown that patients prefer device use over traditional vials/syringes. Pen devices used to inject insulin lead to better compliance, are quicker to inject, dosing is much more accurate, and, *surprisingly, are more cost effective*. I challenge my colleagues to take full responsibility for what their patients use. If a provider believes in pen devices, most of his/her patients will use them. The products your patients use is a direct reflection of what you practice. Educating providers to change their beliefs and practices is key to moving American diabetic patients from syringes to pen devices.

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