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## Presentation Abstract

Presentation 919

Number:

Title: **Motivating type 1 diabetic patients to learn carbohydrate counting through a cultural/aesthetic experience**

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Abstract: **Background and aims:** Carbohydrate (CHO) counting is an important tool that allows diabetic patients greater diet flexibility and improved glycemic control. Yet learning this method is challenging and requires careful application. The purpose of this initiative is to propose a cultural/aesthetic approach to raising awareness and motivating type 1 diabetic patients to learn and apply CHO counting.

**Materials and methods:** During 3 guided tours at the "Pinacoteca di Brera" in Milan, Italy, type 1 diabetic patients were shown how to calculate the CHO content of food represented in paintings (Figure 1). Out of the 54 participants, 20 had previously received information on CHO counting (experienced group), and 34 had not (naïve group). A suitable route had previously been identified by selecting paintings depicting banquets, still lives, and last suppers. A professional guide explained the historical and artistic value of the paintings, while a dietitian discussed content of the foods depicted. After the visit, the participants completed an anonymous questionnaire to evaluate the initiative and were asked to estimate the CHO content of 21 food items.

**Results:** 92% of participants considered the experience very interesting. 90% thought it improved their knowledge. 95%-97% reported that both nutritional and artistic aspects were presented clearly and in sufficient detail. 87% judged the combination of dietary and cultural information positively; no difference was observed between experienced and naïve participants. Importantly, in the naïve group 87.8% agreed to follow a training course on CHO counting, 73% claimed they would be willing to make changes in their diet and 9.7% reported that they would ask their physicians for their own insulin/CHO ratio. All participants would recommend this experience. When tested on the CHO content of 21 food items, correct answers were 34.4% and 49.6% in the naïve and experienced groups, respectively.

**Conclusion:** Introducing CHO counting in the context of a cultural/aesthetic experience motivated type 1 diabetic patients to learn about this method. The use of visual and verbal communication to convey the necessary dietary concepts appears to be an effective educational tool. The less formal interaction between learners (patients) and teachers (diet and art experts) away from the medical setting reportedly creates a stimulating pedagogical experience. In addition, participation in this initiative in an environment of high cultural prestige may have promoted a dynamic of "narcissistic investment" that motivates patients to engage in learning

