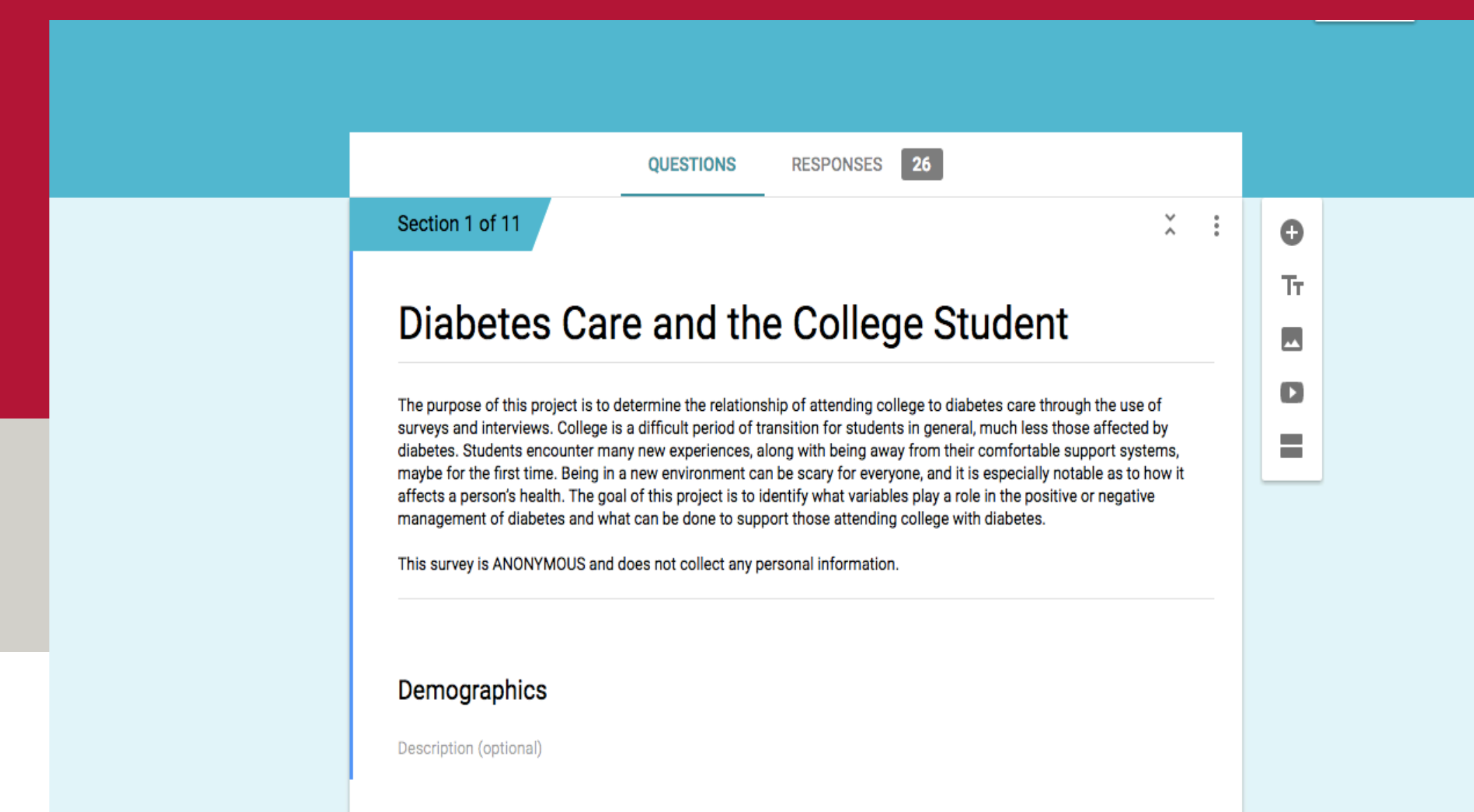


# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Food Science and Human Nutrition

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### Diabetes Care and the College Student



#### Abstract

The American Diabetes Association estimates in the United States there are 29.1 million people (9.3% of the population) living with diabetes. Diabetes is a disease that affects a person's daily life in immense ways and can lead to serious complications, such as neuropathy, blindness, or kidney disease, if not managed properly. College can be a difficult period of transition for students as they encounter new experiences and develop new routines. It is the first time in many individuals' lives that they are learning how to live independently, away from their comfortable support systems. Being in a new environment is challenging, and it is especially notable as to how it can affect a person's health. This causes special regard for those with diabetes since they must think more crucially about the choices they make to feel good and stay healthy. Those with little or no understanding of the disease may find it hard to understand how much of a lifestyle change is required when an individual is diagnosed with diabetes. How an individual responds to the lifestyle change and manages the disease can have a positive or compromising effect on their health. The focus of the current project is to understand diabetes care as it relates to college students.

#### Objectives

To investigate what variables play a role in the positive or negative management of diabetes in college students.

To identify any specific concerns or challenges with practical steps to be taken to have a positive impact for those affected by diabetes.

#### Methods

A survey was constructed and sent to students using guidelines from many sources including the American Diabetes Association and the University of Louisville Diabetes Assessment Instruments. The survey included questions on:

- Basic demographics
- Participants' ratings of themselves on beliefs/practices
- Responses on their own care/choices related to diabetes
- Three open-ended questions on challenges/rewards

Results of the survey were used to create a final tool.

#### Results

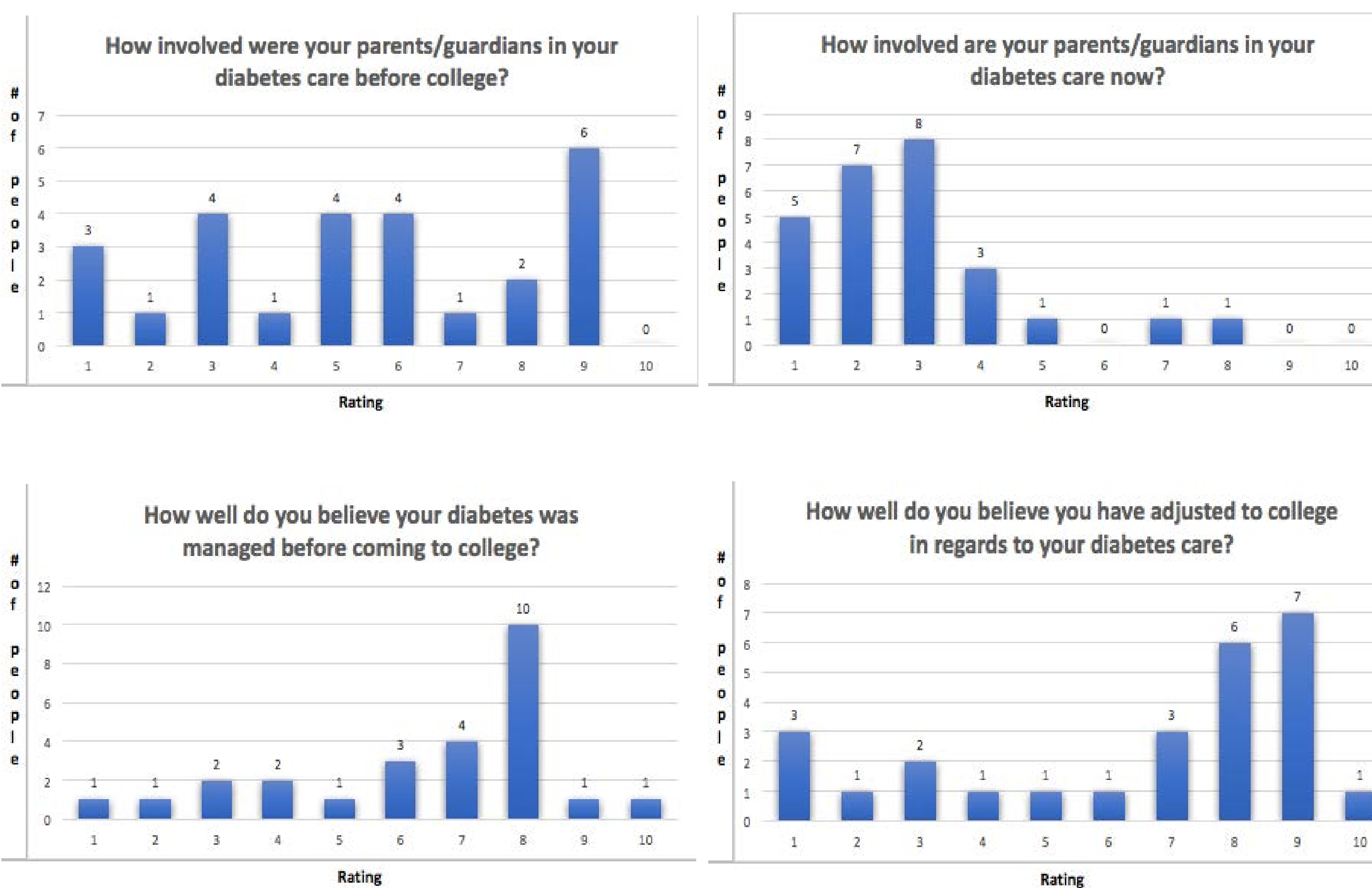
##### Part 1: Data Trends

###### Demographic Information (26 participants)

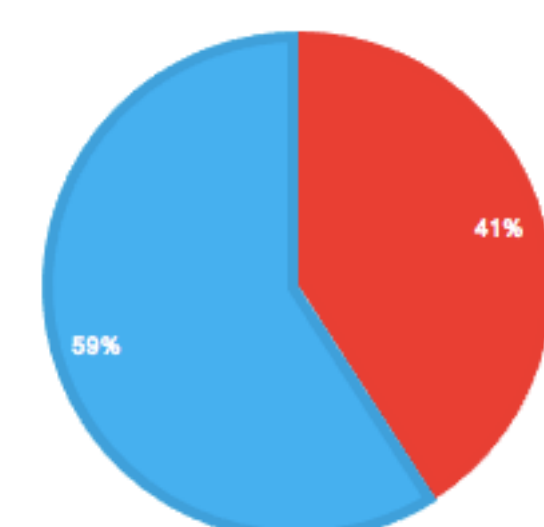
- Gender: 50% Female, 46.2% Male, 3.8% Prefer Not to Answer
- Age: 18-24 years, average= 20.8 years
- Year in School: approximately 20% for each year in school (1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>)
- Type of Diabetes: 80.8% Type 1, 15.4% Type 2, 3.8% Other
- Time with Diabetes: less than 1 year to 20+ years, average= 7-9 years

###### Participant Belief/Practice Ratings

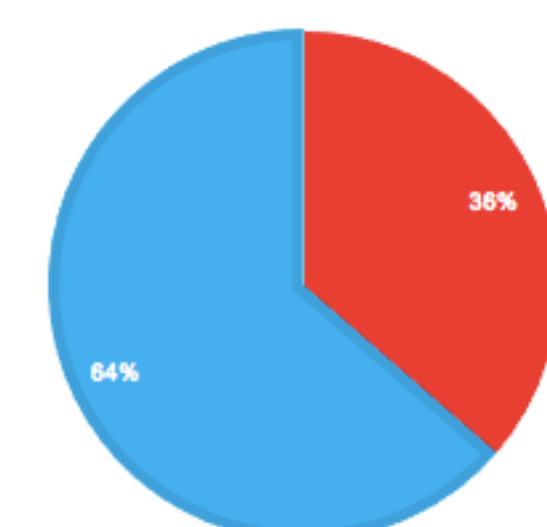
1= not at all, 10= completely



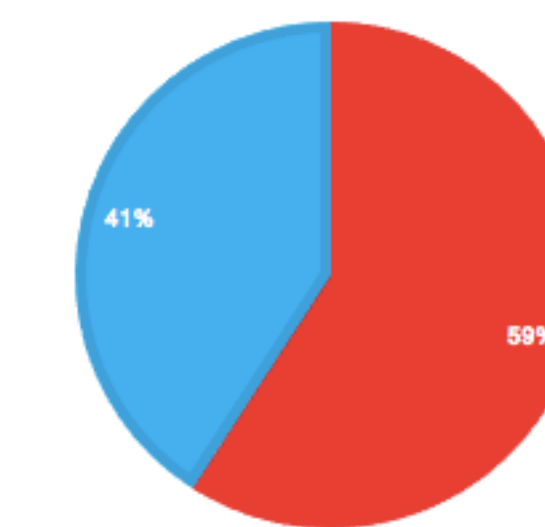
The management of my diabetes has improved since I have been at college. Red= True, Blue= False



The management of my diabetes has worsened since I have been at college.



My parents'/ guardians' role in my diabetes care before college impacted my diabetes care once I got to college.



##### Part 2: Summary of Responses

###### Challenges (number of students)

- Routine/Schedule differences (8)
- Social/Acceptance (6)
- Food-related (6)
- Academic (5)

###### Rewards (number of students)

- Knowledge/Education (10)
- No Rewards (7)
- Independence/Responsibility (6)
- Community/Support (3)

Why is there such a vast difference in responses?  
What can be done to accommodate the varied responses?

##### Part 3: Tool Creation

- This Honors Project resulted in the creation of a pamphlet that encompasses all the resources available that address the numerous challenges of dealing with diabetes and college life, all in one place.
- Pamphlet includes:
  - Other students' challenges and rewards
  - Inspirational support
  - Campus resource contact information:
    - Student Disability Resource Office
    - Diabetes Education Club (DEC)
    - ISU Dietitian
    - Thielen Student Health Center

#### Conclusions

Parental involvement in diabetes care varies before college, then generally decreases, which, depending on the student, may affect his/her care once at college.

Diabetes is an individualized disease, which can cause each student to be struggling with something different related to diabetes care.

There are both challenges and rewards to having diabetes. To promote health, students should be aware of all the resources and support available for them.