

**Title:** Serious Mental Illness (SMI) and Diabetes (DM) Comorbidity: Managing Complexity and Empowering Patients

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**Abstract:** Diabetes mellitus (DM) is common among individuals with serious medical illness (SMI), complicates health outcomes, reduces quality of life, and leads to premature mortality. Health behaviors commonly seen in individuals with SMI such as cigarette smoking and inactivity may worsen vulnerability to DM. Additionally, second generation antipsychotic medications, which are widely used to treat SMI, can further compound metabolic risk and potentially worsen existing DM. Consistent with the evidence that SMI and DM outcomes are bidirectional, the majority (82%) of individuals believe that the status of their overall health is related to their recovery from SMI. While there is a critical need for effective and practical treatments targeted to individuals with both SMI and DM (SMI-DM), few published studies specifically address this issue. Given the complexity and challenge of both of these disorders in tandem with the interactive challenges and burdens of SMI-DM, it is essential that interventions address the issue of mental and physical health from the perspective of the individual with the disorder, engage individuals to actively participate in illness self-management, and include consideration of barriers to care. Treatments that blend psychoeducation, problem identification, goal-setting, and behavioral modeling/reinforcement and which have been adapted to the primary care setting may be both acceptable and helpful for people with SMI-DM. One approach, Targeted Training in Illness Management (TTIM), uses Peer Educators with SMI-DM to teach and model self-management for these concurrent conditions. These and other types of interventions need to be investigated and refined to advance the care of the most vulnerable individuals with serious mood and psychotic illnesses.