You're listening to You've Got This, episode 406.

Welcome to You've Got This, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic life.

I'm your host, Dr.

Katie Linder.

On this episode, I want to share about a recent experiment that I did and what I learned from the results.

Recently, I had a walking meeting with a colleague, and we ended up talking about how he had purchased a monthly subscription to a service that allowed him to measure his glucose levels in real time and then track the data on an app.

He was raving about the results and how interesting it was to learn about how his body was processing what he was eating in real time.

I had actually never heard about this before.

I was aware of similar technologies for people who are diabetics, but I wasn't aware that there was a service like this that was just available without a prescription of some kind.

Even though I wasn't really aware of the service, I know of the challenges of high glucose levels because I have family members who are type 2 diabetics.

This whole thing was just kind of intriguing to me.

I know that there are definitely benefits of keeping glucose levels stable.

Obviously, one of them is reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes, which basically is a form of insulin resistance, and to prevent things like cardiovascular disease because high blood sugar can damage blood vessels and nerves that are connected to the heart.

The one thing that I think was probably most interesting to me, which is something that my colleague did mention, is that you can have better energy and reduced fatigue when you have controlled glucose levels.

Basically, what that means is you're not spiking all the time because of what you're eating.

You can have energy crashes and fatigue if you're struggling to regulate your glucose.

I was just very intrigued.

As somebody who loves data in all forms, I was like, "Let me look into this and see what this is."

So, I did a little bit of research and I ended up purchasing a four-week subscription to a service by a company called HelloLingo, which I will link to in the show notes.

Just to be clear, this episode is not at all sponsored by this product.

There are definitely other companies that are out there, but I chose this company based on the cost, which was basically under $100 for four weeks, and also because it had an app that I could download to track my data.

Those were the main things I was interested in.

You might be wondering how this works if you've never heard of this.

With this particular company, they send you biosensors in the mail and they work for about two weeks each.

Now, there's an application tool that allows you to install ...

It's like a small disk.

It's like the size of a quarter on the back of your arm.

Obviously, there's a needle because it has to understand what's going on with your blood.

When I put it on, I felt no pain.

There was no discomfort.

I did have my partner help me put it on just because it's kind of in an awkward space in the back of your arm, but you could probably do this on your own.

I just had him help me do it when I had to do it twice.

I did it for the first two weeks and then I took it out and then I did a second two weeks.

It basically sticks to your skin until you remove it when it runs out after that two week mark.

Now, this is also tracked in the app and the app tells you when you're getting close to the two weeks.

It's easy to know.

In the beginning, I will note I was concerned that showering with this disk thing would like make it fall off, but it was incredibly sticky.

I never had an issue with that.

I had heard of other people having problems with having these biosensors not stay and I didn't have that issue.

I'll just mention that if that's something that you're interested to know.

Once you install the biosensor, then you hook it into the app and it basically has like a Bluetooth connection and after about an hour, it starts tracking your glucose levels in real time.

You do need an app that runs in basically the background on your phone and if you turn off the app, you're not getting the real time data.

I will note this was slightly annoying to me because I regularly close all the apps on my phone and I wasn't used to having one up all the time and so I had to really just kind of pay attention to that.

In the app, you can log workouts, you can log meals, you can log what they call like stressful events that might impact your glucose.

I was able to connect the app for this to my Apple Health app.

My workouts were immediately ported over, but I did have to log my meals manually.

Now you might be like, "What is a stressful event?"

Well, I will note that during the period that I was doing this tracking, I did fly, which for me is a stressful event and I did notice that my glucose was impacted by that.

It's just kind of things that for you feel stressful and obviously your mileage will vary on what that is for you.

Now the other thing that I think is helpful to know about this particular app and product is it gives you a numeric score based on the spikes that you have in your glucose.

They call this a lingo score and it started with a score of about 60 as a goal and I think that's what they give to everybody.

Now 60 is not the level of your glucose, it's the amount of things, the amount of the score that kind of adds up over time.

So if you are spiking like fast and then you're coming down and crashing, you get a score.

Like it kind of notes it in the app.

Whereas if you have kind of a slower rise in glucose and then it comes down more slowly, you don't really get a score associated with that.

So I started out with 60 over the course of a week.

Like you're supposed to try to have under 10 points a day basically.

And then over four weeks that I was tracking my glucose, the app eventually dropped me down to like 40, 42 and then it was like 26.

So it kind of recognizes where you are normally at, you know, with your spikes and what this is supposed to be.

And it's kind of challenging you to pay attention to this and to bring that number lower over time.

So for those of you who are interested in like gamification, it's a little bit like that in terms of trying to motivate you to pay attention.

So with all of that context of like what this thing is and how it works, here are some of the things that I learned through this experiment.

And I do just want to note that like, obviously all of our bodies are different.

So this is clearly based on my own personal data, my health, your results could absolutely vary.

But here's some things that I took away.

The first thing that I learned was that my body processes glucose way more easily when I ate protein alongside carbs.

Even 20 grams of protein could make a difference.

And this is like the equivalent to the drink that I make that has almond milk and protein powder.

It's like 10 ounces of liquid, but it was 20 grams of protein and I experienced less of a spike the more protein that I ate.

So I also have a morning smoothie that has about 50 grams of protein that's mixed with fruit and like Greek yogurt and things like that.

And it had basically no spike when I had that smoothie.

So when I saw the difference that the protein was making, it did motivate me to try and incorporate more protein into my meals on a more regular basis, or at the very least to kind of like mix my carbs with protein because I was noticing a real difference in my glucose levels.

The second thing that I noticed was that my exercise could really make an impact on my glucose levels.

So on the mornings where I worked out after I ate, I could head off a glucose spike and even working out before eating meant that my glucose levels were more in control.

I also saw less of a spike or none at all when I would take a walk during my lunch hour, which is a pretty regular thing than I do either before or after I ate.

And then one day I decided to experiment and I worked out for a really long period of time.

I did a 40 plus mile bike ride over several hours and I basically couldn't get myself to spike for that entire day, even when I was eating heavy carbs because I had just had such regular kind of consistent movement throughout the day.

Now the third takeaway for me is that I tend to process glucose well and I have, you know, basically no indication of insulin resistance.

Now of course this is not like a medical doctor telling me this.

I'm obviously looking and trusting, you know, that this data is accurate, but the colleague that I learned about this from, he's an athlete, you know, he's a pretty active guy and he was surprised to learn that he was really struggling to process glucose and he actually had to adjust his diet to get his spikes to like go away.

And overall I never really spiked above around 140 and I often hovered around 70 or even lower and sometimes it seemed like my glucose levels were actually too low instead of too high.

So I didn't feel like this identified any specific like longer term issue for me, which I mean, I'm always kind of intrigued by stuff like that.

And so it was just kind of interesting to see that showing up in the data.

Now the fourth takeaway for me was that four weeks of data was enough.

The company that I used has subscription services where you can kind of keep the measurement going for like months at a time or like have an annual subscription.

And I found that after four weeks of gathering information, especially because I have a pretty regular dietary schedule and I eat, you know, similar foods a lot and I have regular exercise habits, I had kind of learned what I needed in order to make the light adjustments that I might want to make to, you know, my diet or my, my movement practices.

Now that said, I think if you're kind of all over the place in terms of like what you're eating, I was actually like intentionally experimenting with things when it, because I knew that I was measuring this.

So I would try like different food combinations and things like that just to kind of see what would happen.

And I was also trying to exercise like before I was eating and after I was eating and just kind of like playing around with it a little bit.

So one thing that you might consider if you're thinking of doing something like this and you want to do it for like two weeks or four weeks, which could absolutely be enough is to like do it during a period of time when you have like some flexibility in your schedule, because it was interesting to try to do this like when I was traveling and to also do it, you know, just when I'm working full time, like I can't always get away for a walk and things like that.

So it really does allow you to kind of play with some things and see what might make a difference for you.

So as always, of course, I would love to answer your questions about this, but it was a fun experiment just to kind of try this out and see what I thought.

And if you do have questions, you can always email me at hello@drkatylinder.com.

I always love to hear from you.

And I always love playing around with this stuff and looking at the data.

So this is a really fun one.

Thanks for listening.

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