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Hemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub> (HbA<sub>1c</sub>) provides only limited and often misleading information about patient behavior, said Suzanne Ben-

Although it's widely assumed that patients with high HbA<sub>1c</sub> levels are poorly compliant with diabetes care instructions across the board, data from numerous studies indicate otherwise. In reality, patient behavior and HbA<sub>1c</sub> are only weakly correlated, Dr. Johnson said at a conference on the management of diabetes in youth.

Many physicians fall into the trap of thinking of compliance as a sort of personality trait. But compliant behavior with one component of the diabetes regimen—say, blood glucose testing, or exercise—

“The bottom line is if you want to know what patients are doing, you’re going to have to assess all the components of the regimen you consider important. We’d like to think there’s a simple answer, like just measuring glycosylated hemoglobin, but the data really don’t support that. You’re going to have to do some extra work if you’re interested [in helping patients] manage it better,” Dr. Johnson continued.



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**DR. JOHNSON**

The meeting was sponsored by the Barbara Davis Center for Childhood Diabetes, the University of Colorado, and the Children's Diabetes Foundation at Denver. ■