

## The Diabetic Protagonist is Well

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### ABSTRACT

This research examines the representation of Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) in contemporary young adult fiction, moving beyond the symptoms of the disease to see it as a catalyst in defining a character. Based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), this research contends that the regulation of blood sugar is a daily activity that becomes a profound space of inner conflict, where the narrator's need for autonomy is at odds with the biological needs of a chronic disease. The five texts looked at are, *The Girls Are Never Gone* by Sarah Glenn Marshall, *Sal and Gabi Break the Universe* by Carols Hernandez, *Sweetblood* by Pete Hautman, *Sugar Scars* by Travis Norwood and *Accidental Demons* by Clare Edge. This research also looks at the concept of "metabolic sovereignty" as the transformation from controlled to autonomous motivation. The internal struggles of the characters' development are about integrating T1D into a unified sense of identity. This process fulfills the need for competence at managing the metabolic self and social stigma. The argument is that T1D in contemporary literary representation is a complex metaphor for the general teenage struggle for self-determination, pointing out that the process of self-determination is about navigating both the physical and psychological aspects.

Keywords: Type 1 Diabetes, Self-determination theory, Identity, Autonomy, Character growth.

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