

Investing in diabetes education today to protect tomorrow

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Diabetes affects more than half a billion people across the globe today, around 537 million, and rising. By 2030, that figure is expected to reach 640 million, equating to one in nine people globally living with diabetes, according to estimates from the 10th edition of the International Diabetes Federation Diabetes Atlas.

In a unified effort to help stem the tide, Member States of the World Health Organisation (WHO) have set ambitious global targets for diabetes to be achieved by 2030. These include ensuring that 80 per cent of people living with diabetes worldwide are diagnosed and have good control of blood glucose and blood pressure.

With the overall aim of the targets to reduce the impact of diabetes and move towards a world where all people who are diagnosed have access to '*equitable, comprehensive, affordable and quality treatment and care*', diabetes education must be made a global priority.

Education from the outset

To ensure that people living with diabetes can successfully manage their condition, the right understanding and education is vital. This starts at the point of diagnosis, with people having access to comprehensive information and education from day

one, and then throughout their lifetime. This will enable people living with diabetes to effectively manage the condition and avoid or delay potentially life-threatening complications including blindness, kidney failure or stroke.

However, research shows that for people living with diabetes, consultation time is limited, with the average person spending less than three hours per year with a healthcare professional. This makes it all the more important for healthcare professionals to make the most of the time they have available during appointments and have access to ongoing training in order to provide the best possible diabetes treatment, care and advice when it's needed most.

More work to be done

With current estimates suggesting that nearly half of adults living with diabetes are undiagnosed, the need for access to education has never been more important. According to Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO, diabetes is now the only major non-communicable disease for which the risk of dying early is continuing to rise.

This World Diabetes Day, IDF is campaigning for improved education and training for people living with diabetes and healthcare professionals to ensure support is there for all to help detect, diagnose and provide the best possible care.

IDF is calling on the global diabetes community and members of the public to lobby their national health minister to request the right resources – both human and financial – be allocated to diabetes education.

The only way we can protect the health of global citizens tomorrow is to invest in the right education and access to information today.

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