



# Global Advocacy Diabetes

The newsletter of the Parliamentary Diabetes Global Network  
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## Remember the other Pandemic

If every person with diabetes lived in the same country it would be the third most populated on the planet and the numbers continue to grow.

It is also a killer. In Europe alone one person dies ever six seconds of a diabetes related condition.

The focus is on the Corona virus but those who care about diabetes should not ease off their advocacy for this other pandemic.

As the Covid19 scare continues to grip the world, doctors warn that those with underlying conditions such as diabetes should be extra careful.

Dr Altamash Shaikh, consultant endocrinologist, diabetologist and metabolic specialist at Masina hospital in Mumbai, said: "Their (people with diabetes) immunity is low and their chances of developing complications resulting from infections is very high."

The early data is inconclusive as to whether diabetes patients are at a higher risk to get COVID-19 infection. Although it is established that where glucose is uncontrolled diabetes reduces immunity and increases the complications resulting from a secondary bacterial infection.

Until we get some data on how many of the reported deaths had underlying health conditions and that these were connected to diabetes we cannot know for sure.

**Advocacy Action:** Can you ask for the data on the numbers of covid19 deaths connected with diabetes, which type and the age of the patient? Can this data be shared with other countries? Can you ask in light of Covid19, how your Government is going to cooperate more effectively with others to tackle other and future challenges?

<https://www.theweek.in/news/health/2020/03/21/diabetes-patients-are-at-higher-risk-for-covid-19-infection.html>



Acknowledgement - <https://defeatdiabetes.org/>

### Inside This Issue

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# Tech Demands Grow

With increasing numbers of people with diabetes using technological instruments and gadgets to treat their condition demand for wider access to them grows..

JDRF UK has been looking into the use of medical technology and how to improve access to it for people with Type 1 diabetes.

They are part of the 'pathways to choice' programme and are based on the opinions of people with the condition about the provision of wearable medical technology choices their report features three broad suggestions:

- People with type 1 diabetes should have more time with specialist healthcare professionals at appointments.
- Healthcare professionals should receive mandatory training on type 1 diabetes technology.
- Clinical commissioning groups should do more to reach people with type 1

diabetes from lower socio-economic groups.

One of the recommendations includes the creation of a national diabetes register, modelled on Scotland's SCI-Diabetes. This would have several functions including mapping type 1 diabetes technology uptake, recording spend breakdown per prescribed device, providing regional statistics regarding health outcomes, and empowering clinicians to see patient data in one system.



The very latest tech was on display at the Advanced Technologies and Treatments for Diabetes (ATTD) event held in Madrid this February.

Advocacy Action: What choice is given to patients in your healthcare system regarding medical technology. How difficult would it be to offer choice and potentially marry the most appropriate equipment to the patient. Does your health have a diabetes register?

URL: <https://diabetestimes.co.uk/jdrf-report-publishes-access-to-type-1-technology-barriers-diabetes-addressed-in-jdrf-report/>

## Type 2 Breakthrough Treatment

A "breakthrough" treatment plan for type-2 diabetes has been reported in the British press suggesting that the UK National Health Service (NHS) is keen to adopt a new standard of treatment.

The course of treatment consists of a liquid diet of 800 calories to be taken as a soup or shake daily for a period of time depending on how long since the patient developed type-2 diabetes.

Research was conducted at Newcastle University where they believe they have proven that type-2 diabetes is reversible, especially in newer patients. They have called it the Diabetes Remission Clinical Trial, (DiRECT) and in recently published findings have shown the massive potential of DiRECT as a general treatment plan.

The treatment is a prescription for a reduction in calorie intake—a potential intervention that is claimed to have shown incredible results for many different conditions.

<https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/simple-new-type-2-diabetes-treatment-may-be-new-standard-of-care/>

## 4.8 Million in UK With Diabetes

The number of people living with diabetes reaches 4.8 million, people with type 2 diabetes are 50% more likely to die prematurely and Diabetes UK is urgently calling on Government to tackle obesity.



**DIABETES UK**  
CARE. CONNECT. CAMPAIGN.

New analysis from Diabetes UK shows that 3.9 million people are currently living with a diagnosis of diabetes, and 90% of those with type 2. In addition, there are almost a million more people living with type 2 diabetes who don't know they have it because they haven't been diagnosed yet, bringing the total number up to more than 4.8 million.

People with type 2 diabetes are 50% more likely to die prematurely than those without diabetes. A common complication of diabetes that can lead to early death is heart disease. People with type 2 diabetes are two to two-and-a-half times more likely to experience heart failure and twice more likely to have a heart attack compared to people without diabetes.

The data shows a stark increase in the number of people living with a diabetes diagnosis in the UK of more than 100,000 from last year. At this rate the number of people with diabetes, including the undiagnosed population, is expected to rise to 5.3 million by 2025.

While not every case of type 2 diabetes is associated with excessive weight, it is the single greatest risk factor, responsible for 80% to 85% of someone's risk of developing the condition. Age, family history and ethnicity can also contribute to someone's risk, with people of African-Caribbean, Black African or South Asian descent two to four times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than white people.

Obesity in England has almost doubled in the last 20 years from 6.9 million to 13 million people, yet Government action to tackle obesity appears to have stalled. Diabetes UK is calling on the Government to honour its manifesto commitment to tackle childhood obesity and make it a top priority to take decisive action in order to stem the tide of obesity. The charity is also calling on the Government and NHS England to continue their focus on preventing devastating complications, through better care for all people with diabetes.

Chris Askew, Chief Executive at Diabetes UK, said: "Type 2 diabetes is an urgent public health crisis, and solving it depends on decisive action that's led by Government, supported by industry and delivered across our society.

"More than half of all cases of type 2 diabetes – and the accompanying risk of developing devastating complications – could be prevented or delayed by supporting people to make healthier choices. This includes mandating industry to make food and drinks healthier and addressing the marketing and promotion of unhealthy foods.

"At the same time, we need to help people understand their personal risk of type 2 diabetes and find tailored clinical support to reduce it. The Government promised to tackle obesity, and it's time for them deliver on this promise, and lead the way in affecting real change. Preventing type 2 diabetes, and the development of devastating complications for those living with the condition has to be a public health priority."

**Advocacy Action:** Ask your government for details of the latest prevalence of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, and check with your national Diabetes Association what action they are taking to raise awareness of diabetes and its causes. If they are agreeable, team up with them to highlight the continuing threat of rising numbers of people with diabetes.

# News From the USA



## Ohio State Senator Campaigns to Cap Insulin Prices

The continuing issue of high insulin prices in the USA is being raised and tackled by politicians at State and Federal level.

In Lakewood, Ohio, the State Senator for the area, Nickie Antonio, has successfully seen parts of her proposal to combat diabetes pass through the Senate Health, Human Service & Medicaid Committee. The legislation would establish Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) Day and encourage Asian Americans to be screened for type 2 diabetes.

She is quoted locally as saying: "I am very appreciative of those who came in to testify and share their stories of loss and near loss of loved ones due to complications of DKA," said Antonio. "We all know someone living with diabetes, but continued awareness can and will save lives."

Her proposal is titled "the Insulin Affordability Act", and was co-sponsored by Nickie Antonio and fellow State Senator Hearcel Craig, from Columbus, Ohio..

Two parts of the proposed package have yet to pass through committee hearings. These parts of the bill would allow the Ohio Attorney General to investigate the price of insulin and would cap the price of insulin at \$100 for a 30-day dosage. Neither proposal has received a hearing yet.

**Advocacy Action:** Are insulin costs rising where you are? Have price caps been tried regionally or nationally? Have they worked? Have you tried a different approach, perhaps in partnership with your national diabetes group or if established in your country, JDRF?

## US Political Action on Diabetes and Comorbidities

Writing in 'The Hill' about the health challenges facing South Asian Americans, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal and global health expert Gayathri Badrinath called for action to address the lack of awareness about the unique and growing heart health risks of South Asian Americans.

South Asian Americans are four times more at risk of developing heart disease.

They warn that early onset diabetes and bad cholesterol are contributing factors that increased the risk of heart disease.

According to Stamford Healthcare

<https://stanfordhealthcare.org/stanford-health-care-now/2015/south-asians-heart-disease-qa.html> South Asians in the US are more likely to have a heart attack before the

age of 50 and are now the group with the highest risk of Type 2 diabetes.

They called for improved education and outreach to the medical establishment and South Asians (of Indian Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, or Nepalese descent) across the country, and for support for the South Asian Heart Health awareness and Research Act 2019 that Pramila Jayapal and U.S. Representative Joe Wilson introduced last

year. The Act aims to develop and disseminate culturally appropriate informational material for the South Asian community.



U.S. Representative Pramila Jayapal represents Washington's 7th District and, is the first South Asian American woman elected to Congress.

**Advocacy Action:** Do you have hard to reach and more at-risk groups within your population? Have you any successful measures you can share?

# PDGN NEWS

## First PDGN European Parliament Meeting

With the help of outgoing UK MEP Jane Brophy on the last day of UK participation in the European Parliament, PDGN held a presentation for Members of the European Parliament to encourage greater advocacy for diabetes and its comorbidities.

Jane introduced PDGN European Lead Claudette Buttigieg MP who spoke about her success of cross party co-operation and working on diabetes in her Maltese Parliament where she is Deputy Speaker.

PDGN Secretary General Adrian Sanders gave a



Some of the attendees around MEP host Jane Brophy with PDGN European lead Claudette Buttigieg and PDGN Co-Chair Sir Michael Hirst..

presentation on how PDGN supports cross-party groups in Parliaments around the world and the diverse challenges they face.

It is hoped that a future meeting will cover some advocacy targets for MEPs to raise in the European Parliament. The EU has competency over public health and a budget for health research grants.

Now a former MEP, Jane Brophy hopes to return to her job as a nutritionist in the National Health Service which is where her interest in diabetes had come from.

**Advocacy Action:** Do you live in an EU Member State? Can you ask your MEPs to join PDGN?

## New Role for PDGN Vice-President

Former Maltese Nationalist Party leader Simon Busuffil has been appointed Secretary General of the centre-right European People's Party (EPP), and will have to resign from Parliament.

Sadly, as he will no longer be a serving parliamentarian, he will also have to give up his Vice-President role within PDGN.



The former MEP has become the Chief of Staff to the leader of the EPP in the European Parliament.

Simon said: "It will be a great privilege to serve at the heart of the European Parliament with the political family that represents my values. I will work tirelessly to repay the trust that is being shown in me by the EPP Group to achieve our goal of a stronger Europe at the service of the people."

PDGN Co-Chair, Sir Michael Hirst paid tribute saying: "Simon has been a terrific advocate for diabetes, in the European and Maltese Parliaments. We are deeply grateful to him for his service to PDGN, and look forward to continuing to work with him in his new and influential role across Europe".

<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/simon-busuffil-appointed-european-peoples-party-secretary-general.763398>

# PDGN People

## What's Happening in Your country?

Let us know what's happening in your area? Add PDGN to your press releases, send us a report on your successes and challenges - preferably with photos to share with others. Together we make the greatest difference. It's hard acting on your own but PDGN wants to hear from you. All the successful groups started with just one person. Send your stories and photos to: [adrian@pdgn.co.uk](mailto:adrian@pdgn.co.uk)

## Can You Help Us?

Would you like to get involved with the management of PDGN? Have an informal chat with one of our co-chairs who can let you know what's involved.

Email our co-chairs Sir Michael Hirst, John Bowis OBE and Chris Delicata via [info@pdgn.co.uk](mailto:info@pdgn.co.uk) with your contact details.

Ask your colleagues to join PDGN - It's easy and free if you are an elected representative, just fill in the membership form on the web page [www.pdgn.co.uk](http://www.pdgn.co.uk)

## Number three Sir Michael Hirst

**PDGN has three Co-Chairs; Chris Delicata, John Bowis OBE and here the third, one of the founders of PDGN, Sir Michael Hirst tells of his interest and involvement.**

My interest in diabetes started when my youngest child was diagnosed with Type 1 at the age of five, over thirty years ago. The 'eureka moment' was when I was handed a glass syringe to practice injecting insulin. I asked the doctor if there was not an easier way to inject and the nurse produced a disposable syringe, but then told me that I would have to pay for it. I felt this was unfair to families who could not afford to pay.

Then a Member of Parliament, I resolved to campaign for improved care and treatment for people with diabetes. It was a weary battle to persuade the Health and Finance Ministries to provide disposable syringes. Mounting concern over HIV prompted the UK Government to provide a free needle exchange to curtail the spread of HIV. I was dismayed that needles were available to drug-abusers, but not to people who were insulin-dependent.

I went to the Prime Minister to seek justice. She listened sympathetically, and instructed the Health Ministry to make disposable syringes available. Its budget assumed one use only for the syringe, so the excess funds were soon available for blood glucose monitoring.

The National Diabetes Association, now Diabetes UK, realised that I could help them with lobbying, and I was elected to the board of trustees, becoming the chairman from 2001-2006. In 2005, IDF asked me to be deputy chair of the successful international campaign for a UN Resolution on Diabetes which proved to be the foundation for many real advances in diabetes care.

In 2006, I was elected to the board of the International Diabetes Federation, becoming President-Elect in 2010 and President in 2013. The Global Network started at that time, when Guy Barnett and I convened a global meeting of Parliamentarians committed to championing diabetes in their own Parliaments.



**Current International Diabetes Federation (IDF) President Professor Andrew Boulton (left), catching up with PDGN Co-Chair and a former IDF President Sir Michael Hirst.**

## Free Valuable Toolkit

Advocacy - What is it, how to do it, making a difference. A free toolkit that can be adapted in many environments including for parliamentarians.

<https://www.t1international.com/toolkit/>

You can also –

[Download the toolkit in Spanish](#)

[Download the toolkit in French](#)

[Download the toolkit in Arabic](#)



## Surge in Diabetes-Related Limb amputations

A study published by Diabetes UK records a surge in toe, foot and leg amputations among diabetes patients.

New analysis by Diabetes UK found that there were 27,465 lower limb amputations related to diabetes in England from 2015 to 2018, an increase of 18.3% from 2011 to 2014.

Its analysis also shows there were hundreds more “major” lower limb amputations, defined as an amputation below the knee, during the same period.

While “minor” lower limb amputations, which can include the removal of a whole foot, have increased from 16,275 to 19,920.

The charity said one in six hospitals do not have multidisciplinary specialist foot care teams, meaning patients may not have access to timely care.

Although the risk of any individual with diabetes having a major amputation has fallen significantly since 2011 and is now one of the lowest internationally, there is still room for improvement.

**Advocacy Action:** Ask your Health Minister how many hospitals have multi-disciplinary foot care teams? If it is not every hospital, ask when every hospital will have a multi-disciplinary foot care team? Are the statistics for diabetes related amputations rising or falling?

## Research Corner

Much of the research and studies make for grim reading with the implications for people and health care systems severe.

All the more important to seek allies who can share and add force to your advocacy to seek improvements to prevention, encourage early diagnosis, and the best treatments.



Effects of Physical Activity on Type 2 Diabetes Incidence and Mortality -

<https://www.docwirenews.com/uncategorized/effects-of-physical-activity-on-type-2-diabetes-incidence-and-mortality/>



Dutch research on the Socio-economic disparities in the association of diet quality and type 2 diabetes incidence.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(19\)30261-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(19)30261-5/fulltext)



Top 5 Diseases People Were Most Curious About in 2019

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/top-5-diseases-people-were-most-curious-about-in-2019/photostory/72996563.cms>



Battling childhood obesity in ASEAN

<https://theaseanpost.com/article/battling-childhood-obesity-asean>



US School snack regulation could reduce childhood type 2 diabetes rates

<https://www.qjmc.com/newsroom/school-snack-regulation-could-reduce-childhood-type-2-diabetes-rates>



# Industry's Role in Singapore's War on Diabetes

Three years after Singapore officially launched its War on Diabetes campaign, with the aim of 'mobilising the whole nation' to tackle the condition, this article assesses how the food and beverage industry has been a key ally in the battle.

<https://www.foodnavigator-asia.com/Article/2020/01/20/Singapore-s-War-on-Diabetes-How-industry-has-played-a-key-role-in-government-s-health-battle>

## Another successful Pollie\* Pedal for Diabetes

The 15th annual Tasmanian Pollie Pedal, held in February, was another great success raising just over Aus \$49,000 – exceeding their target of \$45,000.



He spoke after the ride: "As a Diabetes Australia Ambassador, I have seen the event grow from humble beginnings to a highly anticipated annual event.

The ride, to raise awareness and funds to support the work of Diabetes Tasmania, had 22 riders (a mix of politicians and supporters) who cycled from Wynyard in the North West to Longford in the North of Tasmania.

Retiring PDGN President, Guy Barnett MP, helped found the Tasmanian Pollie Pedal in 2006. He has participated in every ride since.



Greg Johnson CEO Diabetes Australia, Guy Barnett MP, Caroline Wells CEO Diabetes Tasmania and Michael Bailey CEO Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce & Industry

"Since that time, riders have cycled over 4000 kilometres and over Aus \$780,000 has been raised for diabetes education and community awareness activities within Tasmania.

"As a person living with type 1, I'm delighted this year's Pollie Pedal exceeded expectations. I look forward to continuing the charge to raise awareness for people living with diabetes."

\*Pollie is Australian slang for Politician.

## Some competing stories about soda and soda taxes

PDGN has produced briefings and relayed stories of members and groups around the world debating and in many cases implementing soda taxes. Taking stick, there are many competing reports and studies with three linked here.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/does-increasing-soda-prices-discourage-people-from-drinking-it>

[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/23/norwegian-sugar-tax-confectionery-border-sweden?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/23/norwegian-sugar-tax-confectionery-border-sweden?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

<https://arstechnica.com/science/2019/12/the-global-soda-tax-experiment/>





## International Diabetes Federation News

PDGN was delighted that Professor Andrew Boulton and Dr Niti Pall took up the positions of President of IDF Global and Chair of IDF Europe Region respectively, after the General Assembly of IDF in December.

PDGN wishes them both every success in all that they do to further the cause of diabetes globally and in Europe, and looks forward to working constructively with them."

## Technology News

Tandem Diabetes have launched the newest version of its flagship insulin pump in the U.S. market. The company's signature t:slim X2 insulin pump will also now come with Control-IQ technology, which is meant to help stabilise blood sugar levels via an automated insulin dosing system.

<https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/tandem-diabetes-launches-a-new-version-of-its-insulin-pump-2020-01-15>

Specialists in diabetes health teams are blocking access to diabetes technologies which could significantly improve people's lives.

<https://www.diabetes.co.uk/news/2019/oct/specialists-blocking-access-to-important-diabetes-technology-96863900.html>

## New Diabetes Technology to Watch for in 2020

A host of new developments are taking place. Tandem's advanced commercial closed loop system. Insulet's Omnipod, a closed loop system with a patch pump. Medtronic's "Advanced Hybrid Closed

Loop (ACHL) system", Abbott's Libre 2.0 allowing for optional alerts if a patient is out of their glucose range. Dexcom's G7 launch worked on in collaboration with Verily (formerly Google Life

Sciences). And many more from Eversense, Afrezza, Xeris, Lilly and others.

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/diabetes-technology/what-is-diabetes-technology>

## And Finally - A very Important Ask

PDGN is a registered charity run by a Secretary General with volunteer Officers and Trustees who support our growing membership across the world.

Membership is free thanks to the support of commercial and non-commercial organisations who share our aims to prevent diabetes, diagnose diabetes early, and provide the best treatments for diabetes and its comorbidities wherever someone lives.

In these unprecedented times, can you help us? A donation, however small, will help us through the uncertainties of the next few months.

PDGN's income comes from sponsorship by some pharma and tech companies, national diabetes patient organisations who pay a small associate membership fee depending on their size, some medical professional groups, and charitable donations.

To make a donation in any currency, but preferably UK pounds to reduce bank charges, our account details are: PDGN, Sort Code: 09-01-29 Account Number: 23032208.

The BIC is ABBYGB2LXXX and the IBAN is GB34ABBY09012923032208

Thank you, every donation will help PDGN get through the next few months in order to continue helping you, help people with diabetes even more.

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email: [info@pdgn.co.uk](mailto:info@pdgn.co.uk) Registered charity number 1175548. Company number 10339168.

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