


# DiabetesVoice

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON DIABETES

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The double burden of  
diabetes and disaster



unite for diabetes



International  
Diabetes  
Federation

is to learn to eat well, for example avoiding foods with sugar. I gave birth to my baby Camilita and all went well. The educational support is wonderful and very important for all pregnant women. Thank you very much to my diabetes educator.'

**Teresa**, 40-years-old, was diagnosed with GDM June 2013:

'I am 40 and finishing my third pregnancy successfully. I am grateful to the diabetes educational programme which guided me gently on my new diet, because before I learned how to eat well my diet was inadequate. I have learned to have a balanced diet which has helped improve my quality of life and by doing so, symptoms like headaches, depression or other complications that I used to treat with pills, have disappeared.'

**Ana María**, diagnosed with GDM last August, gave birth in October 2013:

'Before starting my treatment for GDM, I was unaware of this disease, but as I was being educated I started to learn. I realised that taking care of me helped me control my weight, and how having a good diet and exercise helped prevent my baby from being born overweight with diabetes or malformed. Thanks to God and the education I received because I have a beautiful, healthy baby! I especially learned that it is best to prevent diabetes rather than fear it.'

## Erum Ghafoor in Pakistan: my experience as a diabetes educator

'I am Erum Ghafoor from Karachi, Pakistan where I am a full time diabetes educator, IDF-expert trainer for Diabetes Conversation Map™ Education tools and a faculty member of IDF Young Leaders in Diabetes Programme. I am also a person living with type 2 diabetes. Currently, I am working in the Baqai Institute of Diabetology and Endocrinology (BIDE), Centre of Education which is supported by the IDF – a pioneer of diabetes education in Pakistan. I began to work in the field of diabetes education when there was no concept of it in our country. As a trainer for the Conversation Map™ Education tools since 2009, I have facilitated assistance for more than 30,000 people and trained 830 other diabetes education facilitators across Pakistan.

**'I am a full-time diabetes educator and I am also a person living with type 2 diabetes.'**

As a healthcare professional, I have observed that people are eager to learn about diabetes care solutions; people want to live healthily with diabetes but they also want to avoid having to pay for expensive treatment for their families. In many situations, diabetes education can solve the majority of diabetes related self-care problems. In Pakistan 30% (42M) of the population live below poverty line, and 60.3% of the population earn under \$2 a day. Approximately 40% (54M) of the population have no access to even basic health services. Resources for diabetes care are scarce: there are about 1,225 people assigned to each doctor and 2,501 people

per nurse. These are the basic hurdles in implementation of diabetes education in our country but as the time passes people have started realising that it's an essential part of diabetes self-care management. BIDE has initiated a university-based diploma in diabetes education in Pakistan for the training of diabetes educators to provide access to quality care. So far, we have trained 108 diabetes educators. There is still a lot more to do but when I look back at the last era, the picture of diabetes care has been turned upside down for the better so we can only hope for a more promising future.'



**Erum Ghafoor gives training on Diabetes Conversation Map™ Education tools**

Erum Ghafoor is a full time diabetes educator, IDF-expert trainer for Diabetes Conversation Map™ Education tools and a faculty member of IDF Young Leaders in Diabetes Programme in Karachi, Pakistan.

## Shaikh Waqar Ahmed, 22-years-old, diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age 18:

*'My name is Shaikh Waqar Ahmed and I am 22 years old. I spent my childhood as an energetic hyperactive child but when I turned 18, I felt my energy levels go down. I felt weak and suddenly started to lose weight. I got tired easily and then I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the Baqai Institute of Diabetology and Endocrinology. At the same time, my younger sister was also diagnosed with type 1 diabetes.'*

*Diabetes was a big shock for me and my family. I lost hope to live, and I left my friends behind because I was scared and ashamed. This was the time when my diabetes educator gave me great support and told me type 1 diabetes can happen to anyone at any time. She made me realise that type 1 diabetes is a lifelong disease and I had to manage it with proper self-care management. I learned that I need to take my insulin and check my blood glucose levels regularly, do some physical activity and watch what I eat. It was her support and encouragement which helped me to accept this challenge. Although sometimes I've had severe hypos (hypoglycaemia or low blood sugar episodes), I do not allow diabetes to defeat*

*me. My diabetes educator introduced me to other persons having similar problems so I did not feel alone, but she also confirmed how I am super exceptional. I have learnt that there's no problem one cannot face. People say diabetes will remain with me for the rest of my life, but I laugh in their faces because I have left diabetes behind me, and taken the word out of my dictionary. I have never, and will never let diabetes interfere with my life. I want to move forward. I am confident that I can spend a healthy and happy life with diabetes and with hard work and dedication I will achieve my goals one day.'*

***'My diabetes educator introduced me to other persons having similar problems, so I did not feel alone.'***



### References

1. International Diabetes Federation. *IDF Diabetes Atlas, 6<sup>th</sup> edn*. IDF, Brussels, 2013.