

case study

Diabetes learning programme offers background information and practical advice to support people with Type 1 diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is a metabolic condition that results in increased blood glucose (commonly called sugar) levels due to a total lack of the hormone insulin. Having diabetes creates many challenges and the more that it is understood, the easier it is to interpret blood glucose readings and adjust insulin appropriately.

The problem

The Bournemouth Diabetes and Endocrine Centre (BDEC) was one of the first centres in the UK to reintroduce pump therapy in 1998, followed by Type 1 structured education in May 1999. This programme is called BERTIE and so far about 250 patients have completed the course which is one day a week for four consecutive weeks. There was a heavy demand for training from other diabetes centres in UK who wanted to set up a similar programme so BIDAC (Bournemouth Insulin Dose Adjustment Course) was started. BDEC also wanted to be able to support its current educational provision by offering patients access to the materials as well as to face-to-face sessions. BDEC needed to find a way for its scarce resources to stretch further.

The solution

Using content based on the BERTIE intensive education programme Nelson Croom created an interactive learning programme designed to introduce people to the principles of carbohydrate counting and insulin dose adjustment. The development team at Nelson Croom have years of experience converting teaching materials into flexible and engaging learning that caters to the needs of individual learners.

The Diabetes learning site provides a resource for people who wish to learn these principles but do not have access to a local education programme, or as a refresher for people who need to update their skills.

BDEC was able to provide this site in partnership with Diabetes UK and with the support of an educational grant from Sanofi Aventis. The learning programme enables learners to more closely match their insulin to their food and lifestyle, manage their diabetes with fewer restrictions and share their experiences with others.

The results

In February 2010 the 10,000th learner logged onto the programme. The course continues to go from strength to strength with, on average, 1,000 new users each month.

Feedback from learners has been resoundingly positive.

"It has been a revelation, I wish this information had been available 10 years ago, I might be healthier now if I had this sort of information then!"

"It was as though someone had turned a light on for me. It was easy to use and for the first time I understood the relationship between carbohydrate and insulin...I'm an active member of an online Diabetes Forum and we regularly recommend members who don't have access to local education programmes to sign up to the course. I don't know anyone who has completed the course who hasn't benefitted from it. It's such a fantastic resource"

"Having been diabetic for 35 years, it still helps me to learn new things e.g. adjusting high blood sugars before a meal with an extra injection."

"I cannot access a DAFNE course for some time, so this online service has been excellent – it was really easy to understand and I am sure it will help to take more control over my blood sugar. A few hours into the regime I am delighted to have been able to go back to my favourite fruit smoothie breakfast"

"The site is absolutely fabulous, full of easy to understand information."

“ I will be recommending this online learning programme to my Type 1 patients immediately. A clear, fun way to get started with carb counting ”

Laila King, Senior Diabetes Specialist Nurse, Educator, London Medica



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