

Singapore

# Diabetes EDUCATORS

ASSOCIATION OF DIABETES EDUCATORS (SINGAPORE) JAN - JUN 2017 MICA (P) 123/03/2015

## Message from President

What are we doing in this war on diabetes? What has been done so far? What are we planning to do? It's going to be a long drawn war and we need to pace our energies before we run out of steam and lose the war.

Prevention with healthy diet and active lifestyle is the first wave of the fight. So in all our outreach events, we need to engage the public to create awareness of diabetes, eat right, active lifestyle and take control of their health. One expert psychologist once said, "Increase active engagement and reduce passive exposure". In Singapore where there's food galore everywhere and hot humid weather, reducing passive exposure to food cues and inconducive temperatures for physical activities is a huge challenge. Different methods and educational tools or games need to be developed and implemented for better public engagement and education. The committee will be embarking on this project and hopefully pilot in outreach events next year.



As we fight together, we need to be trained and equipped with the proper equipment and knowledge. Some of us do not have the privilege and opportunity to attend specialized diabetes training and may feel ill equipped to educate and counsel our patients. So ADES will adopt and conduct International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Train-the Trainer Diabetes Education Program launched at recent IDF-WPR Diabetes Congress 2016 in Taiwan. The training program will be conducted tentatively in May and November 2017. Look out for the training dates and register to upgrade your knowledge and skills!

We look forward to a new year 2017 to innovate, improve and impact our patients and the community! Together we will BEAT diabetes!

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# Addressing Osteoporosis as Part of the NCD Response: Successful Approaches for Integrated Prevention and Care

by Ms Heng Pei Yan



It was an honour to be invited by the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Alliance to be part of the discussion panel for their NCD spotlight session at the recently concluded 6<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Osteoporosis Meeting, held in Singapore from November 4 to 6, 2016. At the same time, it was a bit of mind struggle inside me, trying to link diabetes and osteoporosis together – “What has diabetes got to do with bones?” and “How would the perspective from a diabetes patient be useful at a conference about bones?”

At the NCD discussion panel session, there were two other speakers. Dr Tara Singh Bam, Asia Pacific Deputy Regional Director of The Union, chaired the session. Dr Singh spoke about the importance of integrated approach to address NCD comorbidities and their risk factors. The second speaker was Professor Cyrus Cooper, Director of the MRC Lifecourse Epidemiology Unit, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Southampton and Professor of Epidemiology at the Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences, University of Oxford. Professor Cooper focused on the

importance of integrated care on bone and diabetes comorbidities.

## 1. WORKING TOGETHER

Together with Dr. Singh and Professor Cooper, common messages were surfaced. In the NCD groups, diseases are interlinked with each other as comorbidities. Hence, we cannot just be firefighting non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, as an individual disease, but should work together with other non-communicable diseases and firefight together.

## 2. WORKING AT VARIOUS LEVELS

At the same time, changes, interventions and approached to tackle NCDs need to be carried out at the various levels (NCD, global, national/ population, community/ grassroots), as well as the push for policy changes (working with the government). More essentially, the urgent need to heighten awareness of non-communicable diseases to the public.

## 3. AWARENESS – PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

This is the most frequently mentioned point, not just from the panel speakers but also from the audiences. A lot more work needs to be done to

increase the level of awareness of non-communicable diseases to the general public. With the increased activity on the Internet and through social media platforms, information communication can reach large audiences within seconds and some of this information may be skewed or factually incorrect. How can the actual voices of advocates overcome the misinformed Internet audience and preconceived notion of general public?

Non-communicable diseases need the help and attention from everyone. It is not the job of the health ministry to handle but involves cooperative and collaborative efforts from all the various stakeholders, advocates, partners to raise public awareness and make a positive change for NCDs. Patients, caregivers, the community, healthcare professionals, pharmaceutical companies and the government need to come together and work together.

From this conference, I learnt that diabetes can increase the risk of osteoporosis. Also, there is plenty of work to be done to heighten public awareness, not just for diabetes but for other non-communicable diseases as well. Hopefully, this can help to spur some ground up initiatives from the community. Perhaps bone mineral density can be included as part of a regular screening process?





# Y Diabetes Weblink with Touch Diabetes Support

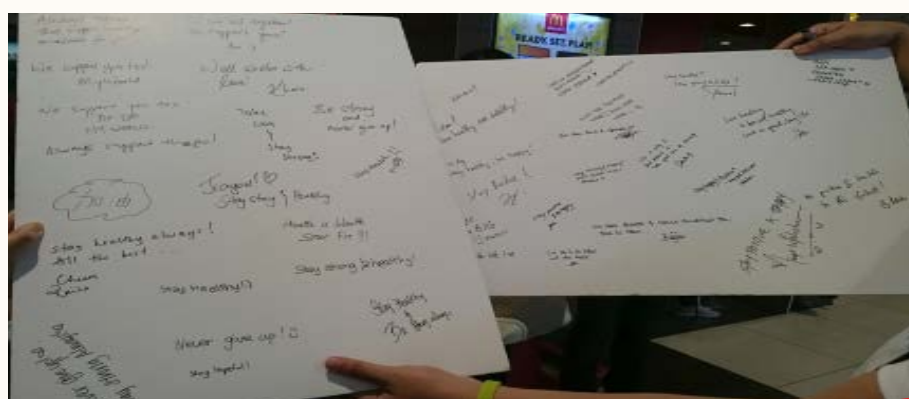
by Ms Chan Man Ee

As Singapore declared 'War on Diabetes', to mark World Diabetes Day this year, Touch Diabetes Support launched the Y Diabetes web link to promote diabetes awareness among youths who are encouraged to support their loved ones and peers with diabetes.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, a group of Changi General Hospital staff joined 506 volunteer 'Youth' Ambassadors (25% are enthusiastic seniors), dispatched nationwide. Our mission: To introduce the web link while collecting encouragement notes to persons with diabetes from youths.

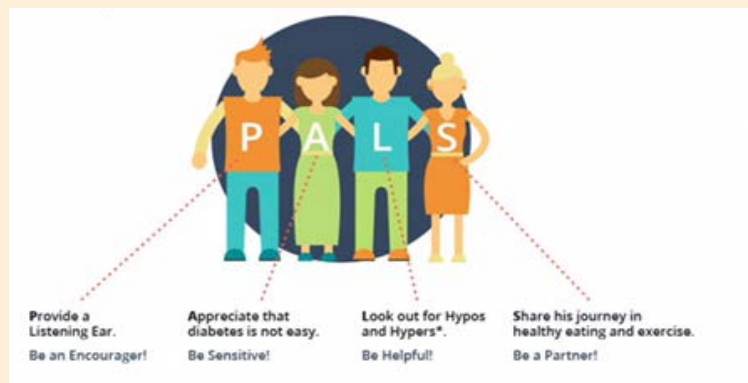


These are some of the penned messages we collected in one afternoon and it was all worth it! And we hope the target of raising awareness to 100,000 youth via social media will be reached soon, gathering greater strength for Singapore's war on diabetes! Share the Y Diabetes link today with 10 friends!



## Youth Ambassadors from Changi General Hospital

As we walked towards our assigned positions outside MRT stations, malls or hospitals, I was reminded that 1 in 10 among the crowd already has Diabetes and among those age 24-45 years old, 1 in 3 may get diabetes by age 65, and 3 in 10 among us may have diabetes before we turn 40. One study revealed among 9 Asian territories, Singapore has the highest proportion of younger diabetes Type 2 patients and many have poor disease control compared to their older counterparts. So, empowering youths early with knowledge on Diabetes may help in early prevention, and, or garner their support for those already diagnosed with diabetes to gain better control of the condition.



Many approached were enthusiastic and sincere in their messages. Some shared own experiences with loved ones with diabetes. We introduced the Y Diabetes Link, showed them how to assess their risks of diabetes on the 'Check Out!! Signs and Symptoms of Diabetes' which consist of a link to a check list which also includes recommended actions based on the person's risks.

Explaining the challenges a person with diabetes might face, we encourage them to be supportive to their peers with diabetes, with the how-to from the link's PALS needed.

**P** – Provide a listening ear. Encourage  
**A** – Appreciate that diabetes is not easy. Be sensitive  
**L** – Look out for Hypo's and Hyper's. Be helpful.  
**S** – Share his journey in healthy eating and exercise. Be a partner.

Some were seen sharing the Y Diabetes link with their friends on the spot! The impact of youth raising awareness amongst youth through media was awesome!

This application needs the latest Flash Player to run.  
 Click to download and install:  
 Get Adobe Flash Player

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### Y Diabetes Quiz

Qn1) Diabetes is a manageable condition  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn2) Diabetes is caused solely by eating too much sweet food  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn3) Insulin is a hormone secreted by the liver  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn4) Complications of diabetes ( eg heart, eye, kidney , nerve disease ) are unavoidable once diabetes is diagnosed  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn5) Hypoglycemia in patients with diabetes is when blood sugar levels fall below 4 mmol/L  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn6) It is risky for people with diabetes to take part in physical exercise  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn7) A person with Type 1 Diabetes requires daily insulin injections to control blood sugar levels  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn8) Type 2 Diabetes cannot be prevented  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn9) Health Screening is not required until 40 years of age  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn10) The best thing I can do for my friend with diabetes is to leave him/her alone  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn11) When my friend with Diabetes is having hypoglycaemia, I can help by offering him/her a sweet drink or juice  
☐ True ☐ False

Qn12) Most people with Diabetes can feel their blood sugars getting high  
☐ True ☐ False

Submit

## NUS Public Health Service on 8 and 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2016 at Clementi Central

by Ms Eio Moi Na

Supporting community events have been one of ADES' mainstay in combating diabetes.

17 ADES members participated in the 2 day annual National University Singapore Public Health Service ( NUS PHS) event for the community organised by NUS Medical Society. A total of 700 participants visited ADES's education booth and had a lively discussion. Several people with diabetes shared about their struggles with diabetes with our nurses at the ADES' booth. Ms Agnes Ngoh, ADES member shared :“ It made life meaningful to me as a volunteer that I could be a listening ear to the people with diabetes at the

public health screening event and also promote self-care management at the same time.”

“There was an overwhelming response from ADES members to volunteer for this health screening event, so much so that we had to turn down some offers. We would certainly look for more opportunities for our members to volunteer in the upcoming year.” said Ms Apple Ong, ADES's Event committee.

Do look out for opportunities to volunteer in the community by visiting our ADES website!



# ADES reaching out to the active older residents at Simei

by Yan Jie

Older adults are getting more active and receive more opportunity for social interaction these days. Research has shown that social interaction offers better benefits for older adults. Staying socially active and maintaining interpersonal relationships can help maintain good physical and emotional health as well as improve cognitive function.

On 30 July 16, ADES was privileged to be invited in the active aging event organized by the People Association (PA) from Changi-Simei Community Centre. ADES members shared on the importance of self-care management to reduce the need to depend on the limited healthcare resources. The event was well organized with a wide range of activities over a short span of four hours, which includes exercises, dancing, medical talks from the Western and Eastern medical physicians. There were also

health screening opportunities for the residents to increase their health knowledge. The event has fostered friendships among the residents. It was indeed commendable for the PA organizing committee in reaching out to the community as we could see many happy faces enjoying the activities.

The event attracted more than 350 senior citizens. Voluntary group such as Active Ageing Committee (AAC) provided simple massage for the elderly. ADES member Ms Tan Siew Khek who works at the eastern region said, “ I am pleased to know that there are many interesting and fun activities organized by the Changi-Simei Community Centre that are available for the older adults and glad that I could volunteer in this event to take part in serving in the community to create diabetes awareness and self-care.”





# Little India Migrant Workers Community Outreach 2016

by Ong Siew Leng Apple

There were nine ADES diabetes educators who did a half-day volunteering work at Little India Migrant Workers Community Outreach on the 19 November 2016 from 1600 to 2000 hours. Twenty seven elderlies came for health screening from 1130 to 1330 hours under the Elderly Support Group. This outreach is a joint partnership with the Worldwide House of Transformation, Singapore Nurses Association and Dermatology Chapter with the aim of reaching out to foreign migrant workers and community at Little India.



The services provided by the ADES volunteers were primarily blood pressure monitoring, point-of-care glucose test, and targeted health counseling. Health counseling topics include healthy diet, weight management, regular exercise, blood pressure and diabetes prevention and management were being conducted. English and Tamil health educational materials published by the Health Promotion Board were given after post counseling for their reference.

We reached out to 205 foreign migrant workers and community on a Sunny Saturday.

14 out of 205 (6%) foreign migrant workers have an elevated point-of-care glucose test and their glucose level ranges from 12mmol/L to >20mmol/L. Half of this group have known Type 2 diabetes mellitus and were formerly follow-up at their homelands.

The ADES volunteers have advised 46 migrants and community to review their blood pressure and blood glucose level at the primary care clinics, their company doctors or Karunya Community Clinic located at Chander Road. The migrant workers expressed that they would prefer to do their follow up at Karunya Community Clinic as it is more affordable to them.





# YOUNG LEADERS OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGION

by Nurashikin Bte Mohamad Zulkifli

Last year, I was nominated by the Association of Diabetes Education Singapore (ADES) to attend the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Young Leaders in Diabetes (YLD) training programme in Taipei, Taiwan for the Western Pacific Region (WPR). The programme was held from the 25th till the 29th of October 2016. As I was a first time participant for this programme, I was not sure what to expect and what I will be doing throughout the 5 days in Taiwan.

For WPR, we have 21 Young Leaders from 19 different countries attending the programme. Nonetheless, I was excited for the experience and to meet the various participants with diabetes.

The next 5 days was filled with insightful presentations, workshops and campaigns that are committed to raising awareness of diabetes and equip me with the knowledge on some major challenges we face in the region. The aims of this programme was to cultivate regional young leaders, discuss disaster mitigation strategies, foster biomedical innovations and advocate for diabetes. It was something different from what I had in mind during our Diabetes Camp.

I was overwhelmed to see the difference we had in dealing with diabetes from different countries. We all had Type 1 Diabetes. We all had our fair share of stories in living with diabetes. And the sharing session we had was good. I learned that some of the countries were not as fortunate.

We also had discussions on our project development for the WPR, on how we can raise awareness about diabetes to the public on media. It was an intense discussion, but we are able to come to a consensus.

The YLD training programme has taught me to continue exposure to positive experiences, settings, and people, as well as abundant opportunities to gain and refine life skills and support young people in their living with diabetes. For me, it was an enjoyable and memorable trip to Taiwan as I get to make new diabetes friends and get in touch with them every now and then and update each other about diabetes related things.



# We are at War

by Lim Pei Kwee

In April 2016, Minister of Health Mr Gan Kim Yong waged war on diabetes and called on all of us to stand together and fight this war. In preparation, several taskforce and workgroups were formed to strategise and formulate a synergistic plan from all fronts. How do we fight this war? George Bernard Shaw, an Irish writer once said “That is the whole secret of successful fighting. Get your enemy at a disadvantage; and never, on any account, fight him on equal terms.” Hence updated knowledge of the enemy, diabetes in this case, is crucial to identify the strategies to fight it successfully.

Public education and engagement is paramount and Minister of Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong and Acting Minister of Education (Schools), Mr Ng Chee Meng launched the logo Let's Beat Diabetes at Atrium, Kallang Wave Mall on 24 September 2016. Hundreds of people participated and a number of the elderly enjoyed the various booths to be aware of diabetes, learn to eat right, adopt an active lifestyle and take control of their health instead of letting diabetes control them.



## Be Aware

Know your risk and screen for diabetes.



## Eat Right

Eat in moderation, choose more whole-grains, fruits, vegetables, and reduce intake of sugar and saturated fat.



## Adopt an Active Lifestyle

Stay fit by engaging in at least 150 minutes of physical activity weekly.



## Take Control

Aim for a healthy weight, and have regular check-ups with your family doctor.

