

DIABETES EVENT

REPORT OF VMC PPG EVENT

Topic: DIABETES

Time and place: 6.00 Thursday 4 October 2018, Group Room VMC

Speakers: Dr Ash Thakore, GP Partner VMC and clinical lead for patients with diabetes
Phayza Fudalla, head of Community Programmes, based at the Abbey Centre, Great Smith Street.

Dr Thakore opened the meeting by explaining that diabetes is a disease of insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas that breaks down what we eat and moves glucose (sugar) out of the bloodstream and into our cells to produce energy. There are two types of diabetes; Type 1 (rare) where the body's immune system attacks the cells that make insulin, and Type 2 (common). If you have Type 2 diabetes your insulin system fails and glucose builds up in your blood causing elevated blood sugar levels with serious long-term complications: blindness, kidney disease, heart disease, stroke and possibly amputations. All these outcomes are preventable if you take control of your lifestyle and develop good habits early enough. Some patients pre-empt problems at the pre-diabetes stage, which is good, others wait until hit by a crisis before changing their lifestyle.

Signs and symptoms

The pre-diabetes symptoms caused by raised blood sugar levels are difficult to diagnose because they tend to be general: often feeling tired and thirsty, urinating frequently, unexplained weight loss, blurred vision, slow healing cuts and wounds etc. However, the simple HbA1c blood test shows the amount of sugar that is sticking to your red blood cells, and if the levels are too high you will be given a target level to aim for with the help of medication and, most importantly, by changing your lifestyle in three major areas.

1. eat well (avoiding too many carbohydrates and sugary food and drink)
2. move more (get into the habit of taking more exercise every day)
3. lose weight (eat less and be more disciplined about your daily calorie intake)

If you can lose 5 – 10% of your body weight it will halve your risk of developing diabetes by 50%.

Remember, the longer your HbA1c level is too high, the more damage to your sugar-coated blood cells and the more likely you are to develop long-term complications.

Patients at risk

It is a fact that diabetes is five times more likely in South Asian, Black African and African-Caribbean ethnic groups than in people of European descent. One in two will develop Type 2 diabetes by the age of 80.

Obesity is a major cause of diabetes – although skinny people are also at risk.

Hypertension does not necessarily cause diabetes, but it increases the risk. 80% of people with Type 2 diabetes have high blood pressure.

VMC's long term support

Phayza Fudalla explained that she is based at the Abbey Centre working with Arabic speakers and Bangladeshis in SW1 and the others in the local community to improve their quality of life, through a programme of health and social activities. She is also a health advisor at VMC's diabetic clinic. She runs a Health Care (HCA) clinic for lifestyle intervention and follow up. Phayza's contact number is: 020 7227 0647.

VMC's DIABETIC CLINIC

Dedicated clinics are held on Friday mornings and are run by Dr Thakore with two nurses trained in looking after patients with diabetes, Phayza and a psychologist. Patients can make appointments via reception and will be given a form for fasting blood tests which should be done about a week before the appointment date. They can also have a full diabetic health check; specialist podiatry care, dietician advice and eye screening can also be arranged. We are a research hub working in conjunction with Imperial College.

Questions and Answers

Q What is the ideal target level for your blood sugar?

A If you have a blood sugar level of 7 or more on two occasions then you are diabetic. Ideally it should be less than 6.

Q Can you train yourself off sugar?

A Research shows that sugar is addictive. Your body doesn't need glucose from processed food and sugary soft drinks. Complex carbohydrates that take a long time to digest are better for you – pulses, lentils, whole grains, vegetables.

The BDMA raises awareness of diabetes and potential complications within the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. It offers diabetes focused expert patient training for the management of the chronic condition. Healthy living initiatives, diet and physical activities, drop-in and advice services. This maybe a useful resource for some. Their details are:

Black and Ethnic Minority Diabetes Association (BEMDA)

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