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Gestational diabetes: a clinical challenge in Africa
Type 1 diabetes in Kenya: treatment and emerging trends
Trace minerals in diabetes prevention and management
Metabolic syndrome in an elite African community
Diabetes in older adults: experience from a rural community

Editor

Professor Geoff Gill
Liverpool School of Tropical
Medicine and
Aintree University Hospital,
Liverpool, UK

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Correspondence to:

African Journal of Diabetes Medicine,
FSG Communications Ltd
Vine House • Fair Green • Reach
Cambridge CB25 0JD • UK
Tel: +44 (0)1638 743633
Fax: +44 (0)1638 743998
E-mail: editor@fsg.co.uk

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Editorial

Type 1 diabetes in Africa

In this edition of the *AJDM*, the nature and treatment of type 1 diabetes in Kenya is reviewed. Type 1 diabetes is often paid less attention to in Africa, since there are far fewer patients than with type 2 diabetes. This is due to the massive increase in prevalence of type 2 disease in the continent related to factors such as urbanisation, the adoption of Western lifestyles, and increased life expectancy. A further factor may be a genuinely low incidence of type 1 diabetes compared with Western countries, for uncertain reasons.¹ Another interesting (and again unexplained) observation, is that in sub-Saharan Africa, the mean age of onset of type 1 diabetes is about 10 years later than in Western Caucasian populations.²

The major problem of type 1 diabetes in Africa is insulin supply. Unlike type 2 patients, the lives of those with type 1 diabetes are totally dependent on insulin treatment. For resource-limited countries, insulin is an expensive drug, and supply can be variable and erratic.³ Patients with type 1 diabetes also rarely have access to self-blood glucose monitoring, clinic HbA_{1c} estimation, and the availability of a comprehensive diabetes care team, including in particular diabetes nurse educators.

African patients with type 1 diabetes deserve more than this. There is no easy 'quick-fix' solution, but at the very least type 1 patients should have guaranteed supplies of insulin with immediate effect.

*Professor Geoff Gill, Editor
African Journal of Diabetes Medicine,
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine,
Liverpool, UK*

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