

Singapore

Diabetes EDUCATORS

ASSOCIATION OF DIABETES EDUCATORS (SINGAPORE) JAN - JUN 2021 MICA (P) 142/08/2017

President Welcome Message

Blessed Year 2021!

As we continue to be attentive with the battle against the COVID-19, may we not lose our focus on the extensive War on Diabetes. Last November, there were many efforts made by institutions to commemorate the World Diabetes Day. ADES was privileged to volunteer at the Diabetes Singapore's Virtual World Diabetes Day 2020. Other than contributing in a session of the public forums, ADES had an e-Booth with appointment setup for the general public to meet our diabetes educators. Promoting diabetes awareness and prevention is an essential effort to beating diabetes. In our individual areas of work, we also support people with diabetes to manage the disease well, improve their qualities of life, retard the disease progression and reduce the risk of complications. These are the vital roles we each play a part in the diabetes battleground.

To practise safe measures against the current pandemic situation, ADES will continue to organise virtual educational webinars to equip the diabetes educators in Singapore. Our ambition now is not just to provide continuous update on diabetes education, but to engage the online participants and diabetes educators. Also, the Certified Diabetes Educators Accreditation and Certification programme will reconvene in the second quarter of 2021, and we look forward to your applications.

ADES will resume business as usual to accept new membership and membership renewal applications. We will cease our complimentary webinars. ADES Members will still enjoy subsidised fee for the ADES educational webinars. Online payment will be introduced in the first quarter of 2021. The working committee members are very excited and working hard to get all these ready for our beloved members and friends of ADES.

I sincerely hope that you will continue to support ADES and its diabetes educational webinars. May we, the community of practice, come together stronger, press on tirelessly to bring diabetes education to a greater height and impact the lives of people with diabetes.

Thank you. Please stay safe and healthy.

Winnie
President, ADES

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Sharing learning experience as a deployed staff against Covid-19

**Ms Sharifah Shahira Binti Syed Mohamed Shariff,
Diabetes Nurse Educator**

Hospital (Swab and Stay) Isolation Facility (HOSIF) and Early Management Ward (ELMa) for COVID patients operated from April to November 2020. Foreign workers and those who were unable to self-isolate will be lodged in HOSIF until COVID swabs results are released. COVID positive patients requiring admissions while waiting for bed in ward and also discharged cases while waiting for disposition by Ministry of Manpower (MOM) or Ministry of Health (MOH) will be lodged in ELMa Ward.

Being deployed for almost four months, does not leave my responsibilities as a trained DNE. Although, most cases were admitted for acute medical issues, there are cases of newly diagnosed Diabetes started off with Oral Hypoglycemic Agents (OHAs) and insulin therapy.

Mr M (not his real initial), a Bangladeshi, was diagnosed with Type 2 DM with HbA1c of 15% and COVID Positive admitted to ELMa ward; while waiting for his disposition by MOM. He Worked as a construction worker for 2 years in Singapore and had no family member with him. He was also facing financial difficulty as the construction line was on suspension.

The Primary team started him with Basal insulin and OHAs. As his common language is Bengali, he can barely understand even simple English. I had the challenge in providing the diabetes education and demonstrating insulin injection technique to him in view of language

barrier. Different approaches were explored to communicate with him (Google Translate, DM leaflets with Bengali translation, pictorial leaflets, etc).

His perseverance, patience and willingness to learn and understand Diabetes had paid off as he was later competent in insulin injection technique. He was discharged to one of the Dormitories in Singapore to serve his quarantine and was given a set of starter kit with a box of pen needles as a kind gesture from a Pharmaceutical company. Mr. M deeply appreciated and was grateful with the education given to him while he was admitted.

Deployment in HOSIF and ELMa had taught me a lot about teamwork and cohesiveness as we came from different departments in the same institution. We learnt to be culturally and religion sensitive as April was fasting month (Ramadan) for the Muslims. We shared with the non-Muslim staff about preparing the Muslim patients for their pre-dawn meal and when to break fast as the majority of the admitted patients were Muslims from Bangladesh.

Last but not least, to all Frontliners involved, thank you for protecting Singapore and stay safe.



Picture of Syrifah in personal protective equipment (PPE)

Tapping on Telemedicine for Diabetes Management during the Pandemic

**Ms Song Guoying
Diabetes Nurse Educator**

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a big challenge for not only Diabetes care and management but for the whole of health industry. Patients with diabetes are classified as high risk individuals as they are susceptible to serious infections and complications as high blood sugar levels can weaken their immune system defences.

Standards of Medical care for patients with diabetes requires 3-4months follow up with their primary physician for regular diabetes monitoring. This is to enable monitoring and control of diabetes complications

The mandatory social distancing and stay home notices have negative impact on accessing health care and self-management for our patients. Institutions were advised to reduce the number of patients for each consult sessions to adhere to the social distancing policy. CGH operations department explored the option of telemedicine to battle the challenge.

The Endocrinologist and DNE decided that telemedicine will be the safest system with the current pandemic situation. Policies and programs were worked out to start the Telephone and video consults. Staff had to attend teleconsultation

course online and certified competent before performing consult. 100% of DNEs attended and completed the online course and quiz.

10% of our stable patients with Diabetes attended the tele-consult session. To ease the work process medical technologies such as Flash Glucose sensors were very useful for the consult sessions. Post consult Medications were delivered to patient's home. This was a close loop system whereby patients were able settle payments and retrieve their future appointments through the links from national platforms such as health buddy.

The limitations of this program are:

- Not all patients are suitable for this care model. Patient selection is very important.
- Patients still needed to return to clinic for their clinical measurements such as blood investigations.

In conclusion, we in CGH found this initiative to be very useful. Moving forward we will be incorporating this care model into our current routine consult. This will also be useful in patients who have just been discharged and requiring additional support from the DNEs. It will improve patients' satisfactions.

WORLD DIABETES DAY 2020 CELEBRATION

Ms Aslena Hussain
Certified Diabetes Educator

World Diabetes Day 2020 celebrated around the theme The Nurse and Diabetes. The campaign aimed to raise awareness around the crucial role that nurses play in supporting people living with diabetes. Nurses currently account for over half of the global health workforce. They do outstanding work to support people living with a wide range of health concerns. As the number of people with diabetes continues to rise across the world, the role of nurses and other health professional support staff becomes increasingly important in managing the impact of the condition.

This year, ADES and SNA co-joined a public diabetes education webinar, under the auspices of Diabetes Singapore, focusing on the roles that our nurses, particularly Diabetes Nurse Educators (DNE), in supporting the education of people with diabetes.

The webinar was graced by President of Singapore Nurses Association (SNA), Ms Samantha Ong and President of Association of Diabetes Educators Singapore (ADES), Ms Winnie Poh. The session was moderated by Ms Aslena Hussain and Ms Praveen Kaur.

WDD Webinar : Diabetes and the Nurse

Speakers	Ms Grace Er Boon Hui Singapore General Hospital	Ms Mariana Mahadi Khoo Teck Puat Hospital	Ms Anita Lin Ying Tan Tock Seng Hospital	Ms Nursyafiqah A Yazid National University Hospital
Topic	Celebrating the role of Nurses in Supporting people with diabetes	Diabetes Self Care: What are the A, B, Cs ?	Blood Glucose Monitoring, Where are we heading ?	Insulin Injections : Common dos and don'ts



(From top left) Picture of Ms Samatha Ong, President of SNA, Ms Nursyafiqah Yazid, Grace Er (Second row, from left) Ms Praveen Kaur, Ms Mariana Mahadi, Ms Anita Lin and (Third row) Ms Aslena Hussain at the WDD 2020 Webinar.



Picture of Ms Winnie Poh, President of ADES, at the WDD 2020 Webinar.



ADES was invited to join in Diabetes Singapore World Diabetes Day light up event, "Shine a light on Diabetes". The event was held at the Singapore Flyer on the 6th November 2020.



Ms Norani Othman, Vice President of ADES, received the plaque on behalf of ADES. The Friends of Diabetes Singapore Award was presented by Dr Kalpana (in red), President of Diabetes Singapore at the Academia@SGH.

ADES E-Booth at the World Diabetes Day 2020 – Meet a Diabetes Nurse

Ms Apple Ong
Certified Diabetes Educator

In view of the COVID-19 situation, the World Diabetes Day 2020 was held online. It was a new and exciting experience for ADES to participate in the virtual E-Booth for the general public to meet a Diabetes Nurse.

Behind the scene there were 3 volunteers, CDE Winnie Poh and CDE Aslena Hussain, who helped with the World Diabetes Day ADES E-Booth appointment setup and CDE Apple Ong, who monitored the appointment uptake and communicated with the nurse volunteers on the actual day itself.

There were 4 nurse volunteers volunteered at the ADES E-Booth at the World Diabetes Day. This team were divided into two per shift. DNE Tan Chwee Yan and CDE Tan Qinghua enthusiastically opened the morning 'Meet a Diabetes Nurse' session, followed by CDE Tan Siew Khek and DNE Wong Theng Theng, who availed themselves devotedly for the afternoon shift.

DNE Tan Chwee Yan was grateful for the volunteering opportunity at the ADES E-Booth. She learned to be a Zoom

host and was able to confidently screen share the education materials with the virtual participants.

CDE Qinghua met Madam N. (not her real initial) at the ADES E-booth. CDE Qinghua provided an education session to help Madam N. to understand her blood glucose readings. She also went through with Madam N. her medications and taught her the prevention and management of hypoglycaemia. Madam N. verbalised that that she was less anxious in managing her diabetes after she met CDE Qinghua. She also expressed her appreciation to receive the psychological support and counselling from the Nurse at the 'Meet a Diabetes Nurse' session.

CDE Tan Siew Khek and DNE Wong Theng Theng both agreed that the volunteering session was a good experience especially it was their first time hosting the videoconference. Even though they were initially unfamiliar with the virtual platform, they were not deterred to volunteer and had braved through in gaining learning experiences.



ADES
Association of Diabetes
Educators (Singapore)

*A Big Thank You to Our
Nurse Volunteers at the
ADES E-Booth*


World Diabetes Day
(Singapore) 2020



(From top left) Ms Tan Chwee Yan, Ms Tan Qinghua, (second row, from left) Ms Tan Siew Khek and Ms Wong Theng Theng

THE COVID-19 VERSION OF DIABETES EDUCATION BY WEBINARS

Dr Joyce Lim Soo Ting
Advanced Practice Nurse and Certified Diabetes Educator

In conjunction with 23rd ADES Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 19 Sept 2020 (Saturday), a webinar on 'digital tech in the war against diabetes in Singapore' was organized and chaired by Ms. Brenda Lim. A holistic approach to using technology during COVID-19 pandemic as the new normal for diabetes education and self-care.

Dr. Michelle Jong, Senior Consultant (TTSH, Endocrinology) emphasized what the educators must know in digital healthcare and APN Joyce Lian Xia (TTSH) strengthened this notion through case studies of improved diabetes care with interactive technology such as the continuous glucose monitoring system. The finale was wrapped by Dr. Ronald Ling and Ms. Lim Mui Lan from 'Connected Health Pte Ltd,' sharing on their software suite with digital care management using Health Coaches to improve self-care strategies in diabetes.

Virtual world is another new normal and ADES caught up with a public booth sharing during the celebration of World Diabetes Day (WDD) 2020. This occasion was opened with heartiest congrats to ADES receiving a plaque 'Friends of Diabetes Singapore' on stage in Academia on 15 November 2020.

While Singapore has stabilized the pandemic, we continued to celebrate WDD 2020 on 28 Nov with another webinar focusing on 'Hypoglycemia care and management', an essential self-care skill that needs attention in both inpatient and outpatient settings. Ms Sharon Fun, an APN in KTPH and Ms Annette Su, Nurse Clinician in NUH, shared insightful knowledge on adult and paediatric hypoglycemia management. In addition, Dr. Loh Keh Chuen, Endocrinologist from Mt Elizabeth Medical Center taught us on 'Hypoglycemia unawareness', an often 'forgotten' condition for healthcare providers when not deliberated on.



Fasting with Diabetes in a Pandemic World

Dr Sueziani Binte Zainudin

Consultant Endocrinology, Department of General Medicine, Sengkang General Hospital

An exceptional year, Ramadan 2020 has been a differing experience for our Muslim patients with diabetes. Whilst Ramadan fasting has been a challenging experience annually for certain groups of patients with diabetes, this year it entails a whole new experience.

As fasting month was welcomed in the midst of an increasing incidence of cases worldwide, there was apprehension and the need to provide a guide to the risk of fasting during the pandemic. International experts had responded to this worldwide concern by providing an expert consensus from the International Diabetes Federation Diabetes and Ramadan International Alliance (IDF DAR). This guide which was communicated via personal communication and webinars do not differ much from the existing most-updated guidelines produced by the same group in 2017.

As our Muslim patients with diabetes continue to perform fasting beyond Ramadan 2020, especially as Eid Aidiladha is around the corner, here are some of the pointers disseminated from the consensus :

- **Are people with diabetes more likely to get COVID-19?**
There is insufficient evidence to show that people with diabetes have increased risk of contracting COVID-19 when compared to the general population.
- **Do people with diabetes have a higher chance of experiencing serious complications from COVID-19?**
Yes, people with diabetes have an increased risk of developing serious complications from COVID-19. The risk is increased further in those with pre-existing diabetes complications such as heart disease, other vascular conditions or kidney conditions.
- **Is it safe for a person with diabetes to fast?**
In general, fasting do not constitute increased risk for most people with diabetes. However, some people with diabetes should not fast due to increased risk of complications. Hence, people with diabetes should discuss with their physicians to assess their risk of diabetes complications whilst fasting.
- **Which groups are at increased risk for fasting and advised not to fast?**
These would include those with persistently high glucose levels, recent severe complications such as hyperglycemic crisis, other concurrent medical conditions such as heart disease, kidney conditions or foot infections, elderly people with general poor health and those who are acutely ill.

- **Diabetes, fasting and COVID-19 practical advice**
As people with diabetes are at higher risk of severe acute infections due to reduced ability to fight against infection from high glucose level, especially in the presence of other medical comorbidities, they should stay at home and take precautions to avoid crowds.

If they are fasting, they should adhere to their medication as adjusted for fasting prescribed by their doctors and dietary advice for their non-fasting hours. They should ensure adequate water intake, and adjust as advised for those with heart and kidney conditions. Regular physical activity and light exercise could continue, the latter especially during non-fasting hours.

If they become unwell, they should stop the fast, monitor their glucose level, hydrate by drinking water and consult their doctor or diabetes care team for adjustment of their treatment.

Ramadan 2020 came and went without the mouthwatering spread of delicacies at the iconic bazaars to feed the ravenous at the point of breaking of fast. Instead, the need to balance urge with needs in view of the economic downturn and lack of convenience in obtaining packed food may account for a perceived better glycemic control during this Ramadan, and may be just one of the blessings to count.

With the limitation of healthcare services provided to essential services, conversion of traditional means of medication supply to delivery, and conversion of physical consultation to tele-consultation, the push to embrace a digital age becomes the ideal way forward. As the saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention.

It is not yet time to let our guards down. The gradual resumption of services post circuit breaker resulted in an apparent increase in cases of symptomatic diabetes and hyperglycemic crises presenting in the recent weeks.

With this advice, it is hoped that fasting continues to be a safe and worthwhile experience for those who choose to perform fasting amidst the pandemic, whilst keenly welcoming the new norm in the near post-pandemic future.