

DSN Forum newsletter – December 2019

This month is my turn for the newsletter, and the Forum hasn't disappointed – lots of good practice being shared and lots of examples of dedicated diabetes teams up and down the country and further afield! I also have some good news to share. As regular readers will be aware, I work for a Mental Health Trust as their Inpatient Diabetes Nurse. Every year the Trust holds an awards ceremony to recognise staff contributions. There were six awards this year, with three finalists in each category. I was honoured to be nominated for two award categories and I won a gold and bronze award (for the "Making a Positive Difference" and "Unsung Hero" awards, respectively). I feel extremely privileged to work full-time within a Mental Health Trust to support service users, carers and staff with diabetes management and education. I will always take the opportunity to share the work our Trust does within physical health, as parity of esteem is so important and vital for an individual's recovery journey. It would be fantastic if other Mental Health Trusts also developed this role into their organisations; after all, holistic healthcare is what is important.

A new approach to multidisciplinary diabetes care?

Amanda and I also attended the Primary Care Diabetes Society national conference, which took place in Birmingham in November. In the main exhibition hall there were the usual stands of diabetes pharmaceuticals and education; however, there was also the opportunity to submit posters. It wouldn't have been a poster display without the DSN Forum making an appearance, so here we are sharing the Forum with primary care (*Image 1*). During the conference there was an overarching theme of collaboration between services and expanding what we currently label a multidisciplinary team approach to diabetes care.



Image 1. The DSN Forum's poster at the Primary Care Diabetes Society national conference.

We heard the viewpoint that a diabetes team may no longer consist of only a diabetologist, DSN and dietitian but may be joining cardiologists and nephrologists as combined clinics, whether virtual or face-to-face. By having the combined service, diabetes is not treated in silos, where there are waiting lists, missed opportunities and duplication of work, but as a complete cardiovascular assessment. There was even discussion regarding creating a new specialism, the cardiorenal diabetes specialist. I for one think this is an absolutely brilliant idea, and although I can foresee many potential barriers to its implementation, I believe these clinics will save time, resources and, most importantly, improve cardiovascular health outcomes once fully integrated within services. Time will tell, but it's a very exciting prospect.

Young adults and transition services

Our very own Beth (@sotonDSN) shared a welcome leaflet which has been designed for young adults and transition patients within the diabetes service at Southampton (*Image 2*). The leaflet identifies that this particular population group will find paediatric resources too young for them but may still require different ways of accessing



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Image 2. New welcome leaflet for young adults accessing diabetes services at Southampton.



Image 3. DSN Forum members promoting World Diabetes Day.

World Diabetes Day

Last but not least, November is a significant month for the world of diabetes, as November 14th is World Diabetes Day (WDD), which was jointly introduced by the World Health Organization and the International Diabetes Federation. Each year has a specific theme to raise awareness of diabetes, and this year the theme was family. November 14th was chosen for WDD as it marks the birthday of Frederick Banting, who discovered insulin working alongside Charles Best in 1922. The DSN Forum was lit up with examples of teams spreading awareness and resources and support (*Image 3*). On a personal note, it is no secret that my eldest son was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at 4 years old; he is 15 now. The WDD theme of family was particularly poignant for me because of this. Lived experience has taught me that nothing can explain the impact diabetes has on family life, and there is no part of everyday life that it does not penetrate. Siblings, grandparents, teachers, colleagues and friends are all touched by its presence, in addition to parents, carers and significant others, to name just a few. However, the theme of family also means much more than that, until this unwanted visitor invaded our lives, had never even crossed my mind: family also comprises healthcare professionals and the amazing world of social media. People with shared interest and experiences support each other. It will be 11 years this Christmas since my son was diagnosed, but it also marks 11 years since my family extended internationally. We live in hope for a cure... until then, family, in all its forms, is all that matters. ■

information than adult services. Beth has shared this on the DSN Forum platforms and it looks amazing. I will certainly be using the idea for younger service users within our Trust. A link to the PDF leaflet is [available here](#).

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