

DSN Forum newsletter – January 2020

It feels like such a long time since I have written a newsletter now we've gone to monthly. Gone are my Sunday mornings of uploading everyone's letters onto WordPress and spending the first hour of my Sunday morning in bed on various social media sites making sure everyone gets to see it. Now I can do normal things like have a lie-in, eat breakfast in bed or maybe even do some exercise. Hahahahaha, yeah right! I have missed it, though. It's good to be back and we are loving this shiny new format too.

I am writing this in that weird week in between Christmas and New Year where no one really knows what day it is and the diet consists of mostly cheese, crackers and the odd Ferrero Rocher. However, by the time you read this it will be the New Year, and I would like to take this opportunity to say a big Happy New Year from all of us here at DSN Forum HQ.

2020 is a big one for me. I am completing a list of 40 things to do before I hit 40 in November, one of which is to attend the fireworks on New Year's Eve in London. It's one of those things I've always wanted to do but have never been brave enough to face the cold, the crowds and the chaos that is New Year's Eve in London. The tickets have you fenced off in areas, so I'm feeling a little bit claustrophobic already; however, hopefully it will all be OK – at least packed in like sardines we may keep a little heat in the crowd... silver linings.

But before all that, let's take a look at some of the diabetes news from the end of 2019.

Diabetes technology

In diabetes tech news, we had a reminder from the King's College Hospital diabetes team to check pumps for cracks on every visit, after they found one severely broken with a crack from the top to bottom of the pump. We saw the approval of the [Tandem Diabetes Care Control-IQ](#) technology by The US Food and Drug Administration, so further progress in the world of automated insulin delivery.

We also heard that, as of 20 January 2020, the Diasend data download system will no longer be compatible with the FreeStyle Libre. This caused a bit of a stir with healthcare professionals, as many Trusts have IT issues which meant they have been unable to use LibreView on their systems as yet.

Social media: The good, the bad and the ugly

The election results saw some people with diabetes and healthcare professionals alike take to social media to air their views on the fate of the healthcare system in this country. There were fears of privatisation and the rising cost of insulin going forward, with a very unhelpful quote from a famous comedian with diabetes suggesting we had all better start saving up to buy insulin. This is not helpful to anyone – scaremongering of this kind just added to the worry across the diabetes online community, with no evidence behind it. We were reassured by NHS England's Partha Kar that there are no issues with supply of insulin.

Other not-so-good things on Twitter included people using actual shop-bought honey to treat diabetes foot ulcers. Please do not do this! Anyone who has a foot wound should see a healthcare professional, such as a podiatrist, as soon as possible.

Social media can sometimes be a terrible and wonderful place at the same time. At the end of December, sadly, one of our biggest supporters, Fenella Lemonsky, passed away. Fen was an avid Twitter user and, although housebound, she made many friends across the globe due to the kind, honest and thoughtful person that she was. Fenella touched so many lives across the online community, and so, with the help of Nick Cahm, we created a Twibbon, which filled Twitter with lemons for her funeral on Christmas Eve (*Image 1*). There was also a tweet chat for her in which, if you search for [#gbdoc](#) and scroll back to 23 December, you can read through so many wonderful stories of how



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Image 1. The Twibbon created in remembrance of Fenella Lemonsky.



Image 2. Examples of Liverpool Diabetes Partnership's Elf on the Shelf campaign.

kind and supportive she was. There are so many negatives to Twitter, but meeting Fen, even if it was only virtually, and only for a short period of time, will definitely be one of my highs of 2019. I think we could all be a bit more like Fen when engaging with people online; we have created a little saying in our DSN Forum group chat: [#BeMoreLemon!](#)

One example of using social media for good in December was Liverpool Diabetes Partnership's *Elf on the Shelf* campaign. The helpful elves took to Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and spent December spreading educational messages about diabetes, with topics including exercise, alcohol intake, giving up smoking, driving rules, hypoglycaemia and much more. *Image 2* shows a few of the elves in action.

Another example of how social media is used for good: the Forum was sent a message by a person with diabetes thanking their team for supporting

them through a tricky year. We were able to post the comment in the closed group and we found the team members she wanted to thank. They were able to spread the message to the rest of the team in time for Christmas, and I just love that we have so many different diabetes teams all in one place and that we were able to do this.

At the end of the year, we saw some of our diabetes healthcare professionals on the New Year's Honours list. One of our favourite people in diabetes, Professor Gerry Rayman, was made an MBE for his work in improving foot care in inpatient diabetes – thoroughly deserved congratulations, Gerry!

So as we start a new decade, I cannot wait to see what it brings. A new roaring twenties perhaps? A return of flapper dresses and Jazz?... Maybe not. However the 2020s turn out, just remember, when engaging on social media, [#BeMoreLemon!](#) ■

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