

The lack of Diabetes education leads to depression and high costs for families.

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On the 8th of August 2016, Jorge, a young man of 14 years old from Quevedo, diagnosed a year ago with type 1 diabetes, arrived at FUVIDA. His mother says that she had done everything that the endocrinologist recommended, but she has not seen any results, and her child continues to lose weight and each day is weaker (Error 1). She said that she takes Jorge to the Hospital Emergency department up to four times per month.

Jorge uses four types of insulin and yet his glucose remains at 500 mg/dl. Jorge has an HbA1c of 11%. Diabetes control does not depend on the number of types of insulin, but rather the proper dose of insulin.

It all started when her child suddenly lost 30 lbs. He was very thirsty, urinated often and was very hungry (symptoms of diabetes). After being seen by several primary care physicians, and treated for other diseases, he was taken to Guayaquil to a Paediatric Hospital, where they diagnosed Diabetes. They prescribed pills, but 2 weeks later he started vomiting, and had stomach pain, dry skin, weakness and fatigue. (Symptoms of diabetic ketoacidosis).

Jorge had his first dose of insulin two months after diagnosis (Error 2). Jorge has had Type 1 Diabetes for a year but does not yet have a Blood Glucose Monitor. His blood glucose levels are only checked in hospital when he is admitted due to hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia (Error 3). The last Blood Glucose test was 2 weeks ago at the hospital. His mother had to buy 5ml syringes to prick his fingers to get blood for testing (Error 4). The hospital staff have said that they do not want to keep testing him because the blood testing strips are for other patients and they think they have spent too much on him. The family have to spend \$3.50 in the local pharmacy instead (Error 3).

His mother, who works as a housekeeper, expressed that diabetes is very expensive and she has had to appeal to the neighbours to do extra work in order to raise funds. Moreover, she has to spend around \$ 250 per month for the tests that the Doctor requires of her son. She has realised, in reviewing the test results, that the repeated tests do not vary much from month to month. Jorge has always got high amounts of glycated haemoglobin and anaemia (HbA1c 25% and Hb 7 gr/dl). Jorge continues losing weight, and he has been subjected to strict diets at the request of the nutritionist (Error 5).

Jorge constantly asks if there is a cure for diabetes. At school he suffers discrimination. He is not allowed to buy anything at the Canteen because some classmates yell at him to get out of the line calling him "sugary guy". The Canteen Lady doesn't want to sell him anything. The Physical Education teacher limits to him playing only 10 minutes in a game, and he is not chosen in the championship for the school team because he cannot play (Error 6). He asked to his mother buy the uniform for the championships and her mother said to him that it is too expensive to buy a uniform for a game in which his teacher will only permit

him to play for 10 minutes. Although he understands his mother's reasoning, he still feels sad.

Jorge got in contact with FUVIDA through a neighbour who resides in Spain, and has followed our publications on Facebook. The neighbour contacted us from there, opening a new path to Jorge, especially because he will have education in diabetes and his blood glucose monitored which is so important for his control.

Tips

- Error 1. Truth = Diabetes needs a health team to deliver the tools necessary to be able to make decisions but the professional diabetes educator can help inform decisions.
- Error 2. Truth = Type 1 Diabetes treatment consists of injecting insulin immediately. Without insulin children die.
- Error 3 Truth = The patient with diabetes should endeavour to have a blood glucose monitor at home, and to know how to interpret the results.
- Error 4 Truth = Technology offers options such as a Pen that is spring loaded with a lancet that punctures the skin just deep enough to allow a droplet of blood to escape for blood glucose monitoring
- Error 5 Truth = Children with diabetes should be fed just like a child who does not have diabetes. They require nourishment to have adequate immune defences. Diabetes is a disease which affects immunity. If their defences are low, people with Diabetes are likely to acquire viral or bacterial diseases. Normal value of HbC 36 - 48% , normal value of Hb 12 - 16 g/dl.
- Error 6 Truth = Physical activity is one of the pillars for good control of diabetes. Teachers must be trained to check glucose before, during and after exercise and know how to act in each episode. They must learn to manage hypoglycaemia. Schools must have a Blood Glucose Monitor.

Despite many advances in diabetes and channels of education and training, children suffer from incorrect diagnosis or poor treatment. The lack of trained professionals in diabetes, leads to complications and death in some cases.

Supplies for Diabetes must be prioritized. There are specific ranges for blood constituents that do not change from month to month. Jorge should have obtained a Blood Glucose Monitor when he received his diagnosis.