

Hi there!

I am honoured and humbled to have the opportunity to attend and represent adults with Type 1 Diabetes at the World Diabetes Congress which is happening right now in Cape Town, South Africa. No less than TWELVE thousand people from 160 countries have come together to talk about anything and everything in the world of D. It's very exciting and inspiring!!

**This is my half-time report.** I wanted to get some exciting news and things I've learnt in the first few days of the conference to you ASAP.

Will write more soon! Make sure you and your friends and colleagues are subscribed to Yada Yada to get more news from the World of Diabetes in the coming weeks.

Sorry this email is so text heavy. Internet connection at the conference won't let me play with images and stuff - Mel has been spoiling you the last few months with beautiful pics in the newsletter - hope you don't mind just a heap of words this time!

## Type 1 on the Agenda. Insulin Saves Lives.

The opening lecture of the congress from outgoing President of the International Diabetes Federation, Professor Pierre Lefebvre - I was 15 minutes early but still got shuttled into one of several overflow rooms, this is the biggest conference to ever come to Cape Town! - was "The diabetes Pandemics - What have we done? What shall we do?". It began with Type 1 - and Prof Lefebvre said that we must not forget about Type 1 diabetes despite its relatively small numbers but it is so close to all our hearts because it affects the younger people.

Why exactly rates of Type 1 diabetes are rising around the world, Prof Lefebvre told the delegates, was a great mystery of our time.

The main message in regards to Type 1 was that those horrific photos we've seen of emaciated children dying before insulin was discovered in the early 20th century, still happens today and the Professor stated, repeatedly: "This is unacceptable." He was encouraged that the issue was gaining pace, with the cover of Lantus journal 3 weeks ago addressing the issue of insulin availability. He applauded the work of Australian organisation [Insulin for Life](#), and explained that the IDF now have a formal contract with them to support their work. Also explained that one of the drug companies had offered to 48 of the poorest countries in the world insulin at 20% of the regular cost and only a very few took up the offer - and even in these countries insulin was still sold to people with diabetes at the original price. "This is unacceptable." We have a long way to go.

## Exercise - Is BG Control Possible?

Michael Riddell from Toronto - a Type 1 and exercise physiologist - gave a terrific presentation on the challenges of achieving good control during and after exercise when you have Type 1. A slide I will always remember was the data from continuous bg monitors worn by 20 or so participants on a camp he ran for athletes who happened to have Type 1, where every possible support was available - a multicolour jungle of lines on a graph going everywhere of course. Dr Riddell recommends BG targets of 4.5 - 10 mmol/L during exercise, so dropped these lines onto the slide and showed that almost every participant had what they call "excursions" outside this range.

He went on to show some very interesting work he and his team had done to develop advice about the amount of carbohydrate required or the amount of insulin reduction required to do different types of exercise for different amounts of time, and different body weights. He has done a lot of work into different types of exercise causing sugars to go up or down and why it's different. These tables are published in the Canadian Journal of Diabetes, March 2006, in an article by Perkins and Riddell - see the link below.

There were many references in his talk to "Toronto insulin" which made me laugh. I eventually worked out they meant regular insulin as opposed to Humalog or Lantus or any of this new-fangled stuff, the original Banting & Best stuff discovered in Toronto!

[Read more in the Canadian Diabetes Journal...](#)

## UN Resolution on Diabetes

A United Nations Resolution on Diabetes is expected to be voted on this week. Australia signed up a few weeks back. This will be the first time a non-communicable disease has been recognised by governments and World Diabetes Day will have official UN recognition.

President of the International Diabetes Federation and Australian paediatric endo, Professor Martin Silink, has said that the resolution will also "ask for all member organisations to establish national policies on the treatment, prevention and care of diabetes." Could mean we get some guidelines for ADULTS with Type 1 at last! Here's hoping. Lots of people here are wearing lovely blue circle badges in support of the Resolution. I think it's just the big wigs who get them!

[See Unite for Diabetes for more info...](#)

## The Miracle of Pregnancy, and Wonder of Husbands!

Former Miss America, Nicole Johnson is here. Some of you will have met her at a cocktail party the year she was Miss America and came out to Australia. I haven't met her yet but heard from another Australian that she still remembers us and thinks RC is fabulous! Will hope to say hi soon.

Nicole gave a terrific talk about her experience of becoming a mother earlier this year. She spoke of the fear and anxiety of being pregnant with diabetes in a really touching and powerful way.

She pulled her endo Lois Jovanovic up on stage - who was one of the first people, 25 years ago, to say "why can't diabetic women have babies? let's see if we can find a way that we can?" and has since, literally, written the book on it. This tiny, passionate woman is however somewhat controversial, as I'm sure your endo can confirm!

Nicole and Dr Jovanovic spoke of some research that Nicole participated in during her pregnancy where Dr J is showing that pregnancy is indeed a miracle in many ways, and the growth factor it produces may be actually causing islet regeneration in women with Type 1 during their pregnancies. This does of course stop at labour and may go part way to explain why many women find that things go absolutely haywire immediately after the birth, they said. I was intrigued to hear that Nicole found participating in this research was a terrific distraction from all her fears and worries during the pregnancy and helped her keep calm and focused.

Another interesting point came up in question time where Nicole talked of the support her husband provided, primarily helping her work through fears and anxieties about pregnancy that stemmed from being told she'd never have children at diagnosis - just 15 years ago - but also that upon proposing to her she said she wouldn't give him an answer until he had experienced at least the physical elements of diabetes for 3 days - worn a pump, done test, carb counted etc. He did so, and she said yes, of course. I wonder how our Aussie guys would feel about this demand? The thought of that conversation in my relationship is making me laugh out loud, but maybe it's worth a go? I do like her style!

## Hypos - Are you aware you are unaware?

Professor Stefanie Amiel from the UK is the world expert on hypoglycaemia. And to top it off she speaks English (as opposed to doctor-speak) which is fabulous. I went to a brilliant talk by her this morning explaining the mechanisms behind hypos, how hypo unawareness develops and how it can be detected, reversed and avoided. Interestingly she started by saying that patients can have hypo unawareness but so can *professionals have hypo unawareness* - meaning the impact of hypos is highly underestimated by many health professionals, and should, for example, be a question asked and discussed at every annual review, which it is not currently in many places. She also said that at least 25% of people who have had Type 1 >15 years will have hypo unawareness - but studies of the brain have shown it impairs a part of the brain that means you can very easily be unaware that you are unaware.

I must dash back to the conference now, so will write up my copious notes and photos of her slides a bit later. Also, the following session on whether non-invasive continuous monitoring is ever going to arrive was also good. Answer is it's a long way off, but a few promising places to watch that I will write more about next time.

Finally...

**Another update and news from the World Diabetes Congress coming soon. Make sure you are subscribed to Yada Yada to receive our news and views from the world of D.**

For Melburnians - Don't forget the **Christmas Party** we are hosting on Wednesday, 20th December from 7pm at The Emerald Hotel, 415 Clarendon Street, South Melbourne. All welcome - friends and family. Kid-friendly too. RSVP ESSENTIAL. We're working on a slideshow from CapeTown, including my video of a very interesting Gospel preacher in full flight!

Cheers,

Kate Gilbert  
REALITY CHECK  
*it's young adults who happen to have diabetes*

[Click here to RSVP for the Christmas Party](#)

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