**THERAPEUTIC AND DIAGNOSTIC GUIDELINES**

306  Feasibility of large experimental animal models in testing novel therapeutic strategies for diabetes  


**REVIEW**

331  Exercise intervention under hypoxic condition as a new therapeutic paradigm for type 2 diabetes mellitus: A narrative review  

_Kim SW, Jung WS, Chung S, Park HY_

344  Diagnosis, treatment and prevention of type 2 diabetes mellitus in children and adolescents  

_Serbis A, Giapros V, Kotanidou EP, Galli-Tsinopoulou A, Siomou E_

366  Maternal obesity as a risk factor for developing diabetes in offspring: An epigenetic point of view  

_Lecoutre S, Maqdasy S, Breton C_

383  Diabetic heart disease: A clinical update  

_Rajbhandari J, Fernandez CJ, Agarwal M, Yeap BXY, Pappachan JM_

**MINIREVIEWS**

407  Alphabet strategy for diabetes care: A checklist approach in the time of COVID-19 and beyond  

_Upreti R, Lee JD, Kotecha S, Patel V_

420  Obesity, metabolic health and omics: Current status and future directions  

_Paczkowska-Abdulsalam M, Kretowski A_

437  Malfunction of outer retinal barrier and choroid in the occurrence and progression of diabetic macular edema  

_Țălu Ş, Nicoara SD_

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

**Basic Study**

453  Effect of oligofructose on resistance to postoperative high-fat diet-induced damage of metabolism in diabetic rats after sleeve gastrectomy  


466  Elevated retinol binding protein 4 levels are associated with atherosclerosis in diabetic rats via JAK2/STAT3 signaling pathway  

_Zhou W, Ye SD, Wang W_
Vascular endothelial growth factor B inhibits insulin secretion in MIN6 cells and reduces Ca²⁺ and cyclic adenosine monophosphate levels through PI3K/AKT pathway

Jia JD, Jiang WG, Luo X, Li RR, Zhao YC, Tian G, Li YN

Three-dimensional-arterial spin labeling perfusion correlation with diabetes-associated cognitive dysfunction and vascular endothelial growth factor in type 2 diabetes mellitus rat

Shao JW, Wang JD, He Q, Yang Y, Zou YY, Su W, Xiang ST, Li JB, Fang J
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WJD mainly publishes articles reporting research results and findings obtained in the field of diabetes and covering a wide range of topics including risk factors for diabetes, diabetes complications, experimental diabetes mellitus, type 1 diabetes mellitus, type 2 diabetes mellitus, gestational diabetes, diabetic angiopathies, diabetic cardiomyopathies, diabetic coma, diabetic ketoacidosis, diabetic nephropathies, diabetic neuropathies, Donohue syndrome, fetal macrosomia, and prediabetic state.

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Alphabet strategy for diabetes care: A checklist approach in the time of COVID-19 and beyond

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Author contributions: Upreti R performed most of the writing, prepared the figures; Lee JD researched the data and in the early stage published it; Kotecha S and Patel V created the new version of the care plan; Patel V created the Alphabet Strategy for diabetes care, designed the outline and supervised the writing of this paper.

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Abstract

Chronic disease management requires achievement of critical individualised targets to mitigate again long-term morbidity and premature mortality associated with diabetes mellitus. The responsibility for this lies with both the patient and health care professionals. Care plans have been introduced in many healthcare settings to provide a patient-centred approach that is both evidence-based to deliver positive clinical outcomes and allow individualised care. The Alphabet strategy (AS) for diabetes is based around such a care plan and has been evidenced to deliver high clinical standards in both well-resourced and under-resourced settings. Additional patient educational resources include special care plans for those people with diabetes undertaking fasting during Ramadan, Preconception Care, Prevention and Remission of Diabetes. The Strategy and Care Plan has facilitated evidence-based, cost-efficient multifactorial intervention with an improvement in the National Diabetes Audit targets for blood pressure, cholesterol levels and glycated haemoglobin. Many of these attainments were of the standard seen in intensively treated cohorts of key randomized controlled trials in diabetes care such as the Steno-2 and United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study. This is despite working in a relatively under-resourced service within the United Kingdom National Health Service. The AS for diabetes care is a useful tool to consider for planning care, education of people with diabetes and healthcare professional. During the time of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic the risk factors for the increased mortality observed have to be addressed aggressively. The AS has the potential to help with this aspiration.

Key Words: Alphabet strategy; COVID-19; Care planning; Chronic disease; Diabetes care; Multifactorial interventions; Patient care

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INTRODUCTION

One of the major global public health burdens of this current era, with over 450 million people affected globally, is type 2 diabetes mellitus[1]. Advances in acute care have led to increased life expectancy for patients with diabetes through excellent emergency management of conditions such as acute coronary syndrome, stroke and sepsis. The challenge now is to effectively manage their chronic disease to reduce the other complications of diabetes[1]. This has become especially important as the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continues to spread globally with diabetes mellitus being identified as a significant risk factor for mortality (increased risk: × 2.86 for type 1 diabetes, × 1.80 for type 2 diabetes)[2]. Additionally, poor glycaemic control, obesity, Black and South Asian ethnicities, and chronic kidney disease (CKD) were identified as significant risks for increased mortality in patients with diabetes and COVID-19[3].

A multifactorial approach for diabetes management to reduce complications is encouraged in the United Kingdom through the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines, Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network guidelines and the National Diabetes Audit (NDA). A recent report published by NDA showed that meeting all three treatment targets (glycated haemoglobin, blood pressure, statin prescription) was only achieved in 19.6% for type 1 diabetes and 40.5% for type 2 diabetes patients (In England)[4]. Our institutional average of meeting these targets was 46.5%. It also observed that the percentage of patients receiving NICE recommended care processes has not shown significant improvement from 2012 to 2019.

CONCEPT OF CARE PLANNING

“Care planning” involves the process by which both health care workers and patients have detailed discussions on the condition that the patient has. An individualized plan of management is then agreed based on the patient’s personal values and aspirations for their life. The written document after this process of planning is the “Care plan”[5]. The action plan and interventions required to manage an acute condition are very different than what is required to manage a chronic condition. At the same time, all chronic conditions, may if they differ in the involvement of organs of human body, have a common set of problems which need to be addressed by patient, their families and health carers. This concept is motivated by the physical, psychological and social needs which arise due to the chronic conditions of the patients. Care planning may save the enormous expenditure on chronic diseases which usually runs in billions of pounds[6]. It is important to remember that in an average year of 8766 h, a patient with diabetes will only spend approximately 45 to 90 min with a health care professionals (HCP). This could be two to four appointments of 10-30 min each, rest of the 8764.5 h in the year the patient has to self-manage (personal data based on clinic survey).

Care planning is not only being implemented across different countries but also across different specialties. Though care planning can be distinguished in terms for the conditions or for the patients, in usual practice it is most often for a condition-specific
basis\textsuperscript{[2]}. The care planning content can reflect the perspective of health professional or patient, the extent of the plan to which the behaviour change is intended, and the spread of the plan (i.e. involving only doctor-patient or involving doctor-patient-multidisciplinary teams/social teams)\textsuperscript{[3]}. Care planning also involves behaviour change and subsequent other techniques to sustain those behaviour changes\textsuperscript{[3]}. Care plans are considered to be one of the best tools for standardisation of care processes\textsuperscript{[3]}. Prompts on electronic records such as those used in general practice in United Kingdom also serve this purpose.

**Evidence for multi-factorial intervention**

Rawshani et al\textsuperscript{[4]} investigated the increased risk of cardiovascular events and mortality in type 2 diabetes patients in comparison to general population\textsuperscript{[4]}. This study was conducted on 271174 patients with type 2 diabetes from the Swedish National Diabetes Register who were matched with 1355870 controls without diabetes. The strongest predictors for combined cardiovascular outcomes and death were- current smoking, blood pressure (BP) \( \geq 140/80 \) mmHg, low-density lipoprotein \( \geq 2.5 \) mmol/L, albuminuria (micro or macro), HbA\textsubscript{1c} \( \geq 53 \) mmol/mol. Each of these five factors increased the risk of acute myocardial infarction, stroke, heart failure and mortality in patients with diabetes. The more the number of these risk factors present in a patient with diabetes, the higher was the risk observed for both unfavourable cardiovascular outcomes and mortality in comparison to the control group. This study reflects that multifactorial intervention in patients with diabetes may strongly impact in not only decreasing the adverse cardiovascular outcomes, but also reducing the mortality in diabetic patients. In the cohort \( < 55 \) years of age, the results showed that the increased risk in those with none of these five risk factors vs those with all 5 of the risk factors was: (1) excess mortality \( \times 4.99 \); (2) excess myocardial infarction \( \times 11.35 \); (3) excess stroke \( \times 7.69 \); and (4) excess heart failure \( \times 7.69 \).

Similar results were obtained from the follow-up Steno-2 study which recruited 160 patients with type 2 diabetes with microalbuminuria\textsuperscript{[4-5]}. There were two randomized groups- one group receiving conventional multifactorial treatment and other group receiving intensified target driven therapy (targets included HbA\textsubscript{1c}, fasting serum total cholesterol and triglyceride levels, systolic and diastolic BP). At the start of the initial trial both groups were similar at baseline but developed significant differences by the end, showing that the intensive therapy was better than conventional therapy in attaining the set targets. In the follow-up trial, both groups had received the intensive therapy and the gap of differences was observed to be narrowed by the end of the follow-up trial. The conclusions from the entire trial suggested that there is an absolute risk reduction (ARR) of 20% for death from any cause and an ARR of 29% for cardiovascular events in the intensive therapy group. Moreover, progression of diabetic complications was significantly reduced in the intensive therapy group.

The checklist approach for patient management has been rewarding in other specialities as well. Haynes et al\textsuperscript{[6]} used a two-step surgical checklist in eight hospitals eight cities in different geographical parts of the world\textsuperscript{[6]}. Their intervention with the checklist showed marked improvements in outcomes as reduction of major surgical complications and rate of death.

**The alphabet strategy for diabetes**

Our innovation in diabetes care was the “Alphabet strategy” (AS), which aimed for “simple things to be done right all the time”\textsuperscript{[4]}. It is a mnemonic based checklist incorporating the core diabetes care components\textsuperscript{[4]}; and includes the following (Figure 1): (1) advice on lifestyle: Diet, weight, and physical activity optimisation, not smoking, safe alcohol use, appropriate infection control [and very specifically vs severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)], nationally advised vaccinations (such as against influenza, SARS-CoV-2, pneumococcus); (2) BP: \( < 140/80 \) mmHg, \( < 130/80 \) mmHg if kidneys or eyes affected or any cardiovascular disease; (3) cholesterol and CKD prevention: Total cholesterol \( \leq 4 \) mmol/L, screening for and treating microalbuminuria; (4) diabetes control: HbA\textsubscript{1c} \( \leq 58 \) mmol/mol or an individualised target, avoiding hypoglycaemia and hyperglycaemia interventions (for example diabetes ketoacidosis). Individualised glucose monitoring plans; (5) eye examination: check yearly at least, with referral if indicated; (6) foot care: Daily inspection and examination by patient and yearly examination by HCP; and (7) guardian drugs: Aspirin, clopidogrel and angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors or angiotensin receptor blockers as indicated for primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular and renal diseases.

The first version of the AS was published in 2002\textsuperscript{[4]}. Since then the clinical guidance and Care Plans have been updated yearly. The strategy has proven to be adaptable.
What happens if you follow the Alphabet Strategy? As patients reach their targets, the chances of developing serious complications of diabetes will be reduced!

**Advice**
- Not smoking
- 5 portions of fresh fruit and veg daily
- Weight normal/reducing
- Exercise 30 minutes, 5 times a week

**Blood Pressure**
- Know your BP target

**Cholesterol**
- Know your Cholesterol target

**Diabetes control**
- Know your HbA1c target

**Eyes**
- Checked annually and treated

**Feet**
- Check daily by yourself
- Check annually by a professional

**Guardian Drugs**
- Speak to your diabetes care team about these

All Diabetes problems can be reduced by following a programme like the Alphabet Strategy.

Figure 1 Alphabet Strategy poster for clinics.

and it has been relatively straightforward to adapt it to even the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the curtailment in services during the COVID-19 pandemic we have incorporated an H for Healthcare Professional advice as follows.

Healthcare Professional advice: Especially for problems such as recurrent hypoglycaemia, recurrent diabetic keto-acidosis, difficulty accessing care (including affordability), Ramadan advice, pre-conception advice, driving and occupational advice, remission of diabetes.
The clinical impact of AS was assessed by two audits done in outpatient settings of a district level hospital in United Kingdom. The first audit involved 420 patients with diabetes who were followed over 5 years. The second audit, performed 2 years after the completion of the first audit, involved 1071 patients with diabetes. Comparison of the outcomes of the two audits showed improvement in all AS components (Table 1). An audit conducted in a low-income country (India), with 100 patients with diabetes in an outpatient clinic, also demonstrated the effectiveness of AS (Table 2).

The potential of AS was globally assessed by a survey carried out in the Global AS Implementation Audit. It involved 4537 patients from 52 centres across 32 countries. The data showed that the strategy was highly acceptable to both patients and their healthcare professionals in high, middle and lower income countries.

This new care plan was developed with the National Health Service (NHS) England and NHS Improvement West Midlands our Region Diabetes Expert Advisory Group, Right Care, and the Pharmacy Local Professional Network Chair (Figure 2).

The AS core training materials (slides, documents and videos) have been created to facilitate and disseminate the programme. The training pack distributed to individual patient groups such as Diabetes United Kingdom (Figure 3) consists of:

Patient education posters: Educate the patients about the AS overall. There is a similar poster for diabetes care for specifically during Ramadan developed with the South Asian Health Foundation (Figure 4).

Patient care plans: Empowering to know their NDA target and improve self-efficacy in attaining these. It also guides the important steps for pregnant patients to reduce complications (maternal and foetal). The main components of the care plan are as follows: (1) background information: Personal targets based on NDA, Diabetes United Kingdom 15 Healthcare Essentials, Key contacts; (2) patient’s agenda: Tick section for patients to indicate points for discussion, Questions to reflect on health status and specific goals; (3) patient’s personal agenda: Aspects of care to be documented such as BP, Cholesterol, Creatinine and Urine Albumin Creatinine Ratio, HbA1c, eye screening, feet examination, guardian drugs; (4) drugs and glucose monitoring: The HCP should advice on the dosing, frequency and side effects of any new drugs started for the patient. Advice for the patient on monitoring of blood glucose with an appropriate Glucose Testing Meter including frequency of monitoring. Patient should have Community Pharmacist review also where available; and (5) contact details: There is a list of the important contact details for the key specialists/organizations related to diabetic patient management.

One page guideline: Summary of one-page current NICE guidelines in relation to diabetes care (Figure 1) to achieve higher rates of NDA attainment and facilitate multifactorial interventions. This includes sections on Diabetes Prevention and Diabetes Remission.

Referral guidelines: Diabetes Expert Advisory group advice has been incorporated on who to refer and who not to refer (Figure 5). Clear guidelines are given by Red Amber Green on whom to refer to the specialist diabetes team from primary care and secondary care. Such advice, if implemented, has the potential to reduce hospital admissions and reduce costly complications such as amputation and end-stage renal disease.

Glucose monitoring advice and choice of meter: This has the potential to save £1.74 million in our region if all Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) merely adopted current practice similar to the best performing CCG. Enhancement on top of this can save £6.3 million per year (NHS England and NHS Improvement-West Midlands). Our region has already saved £ 960000 in 12 mo.

Drug optimisation advice: Data from our region shows that adopting best practice across the region would save £1.65 million on one class of diabetes drugs alone, example dipeptidyl peptidase-4 inhibitors (NHS England and NHS Improvement-West Midlands modelling data).

Prevention of diabetes advice: There is 86% chance of remission in selected newly diagnosed patients. Data for this comes from the DiRECT Study[8].

Achieving diabetes care excellence through primary care team programme: This is a low cost (£25) basic e-learning platform that covers all the main aspects of diabetes care and care planning using the AS. It is hosted by Coventry University Health Sciences Faculty. It is also incorporated into Sound Doctor’s Diabetes Education Program for patients, which is Quality Institute for Self-Management Education and Training approved.

**Outcomes from the AS**

**Improvement in process measures**: Implementation of the AS for Diabetes Care resulted in a significant ($P < 0.05$) improvement including lipid measurement, BP,
Table 1 Comparison of achievement of alphabet strategy components between practices of evidence-based medicine audits\(^\text{[10]}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alphabet strategy</th>
<th>Baseline audit, (n = 420)</th>
<th>Follow-up audit, (n = 1071)</th>
<th>(P) value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Smoking status (%)</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Blood pressure (mmHg)</td>
<td>141/77</td>
<td>136/76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Total cholesterol (mmol/L)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LDL cholesterol (mmol/L)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creatinine (mmol/L)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>HbA1c (%) (mmol/mol)</td>
<td>8.3 (67.2)</td>
<td>7.9 (62.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Eye examination (%)</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>97.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Foot examination (%)</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>97.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Aspirin (%)</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACEI/ARB (%)</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lipid lowering (%)</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Follow-up audit was done 2 years later. ACEI: Angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors; ARB: Angiotensin receptor blockers; LDL: Low-density lipoprotein.

Table 2 Change in care process performance following implementation of the alphabet strategy in a low-resource diabetes clinic\(^\text{[10]}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre implementation (%)</th>
<th>Post implementation (%)</th>
<th>(P) value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Body mass index</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smoking status</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smoking cessation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Blood pressure</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Total cholesterol</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lipid profile</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creatinine</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proteinuria</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Fasting and postprandial glucose</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Eye examination</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Feet examination</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Aspirin therapy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACEI/ARB therapy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statin therapy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All three</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS: Not significant; ACEI: Angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors; ARB: Angiotensin receptor blockers.

Improvement in outcome measures: The improvement rates (Table 1) were comparable to standards achieved in clinical trial setting specifically researching intensive treatment strategies like Steno-2 and The United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study.

Patient and health care professional satisfaction: An audit conducted in 27 countries
Diabetes NICE Clinical Guidelines 2021: Locally Adapted Guidelines
Diabetes Care: the Alphabet Strategy Approach

Advice on Lifestyle:

General
- Smoking cessation, physical activity, diet, weight control (5-10% loss/year if overweight). Details below
- Structured education: especially self-management, beliefs, knowledge, skills, driving, occupation
- Regular follow-up with Care Planning. Annual Review is essential. 20% with early severe complications will be persistent Diabetes Clinic non-attenders. Ramadan advice. Advise Diabetes UK membership.

Diabetes Prevention Lifestyle (PH 38) and for diagnosed Diabetes
- Physical Activity: choose activities that are enjoyed and fit into daily lives. At least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more, eg: 30 mins./5 days a week. Or 75 mins. vigorous intensity activity across the week or combinations of moderate and vigorous intensity activity. Also resistance physical activity to improve muscle strength at least two days a week. Minimise being sedentary (sitting)
- Weight management: encourage overweight and obese people to gradually reduce calorie intake. Explain 5–10% weight loss in 1 year is realistic initial target. Use evidence-based behaviour-change techniques. Motivate and support to achieve and maintain – a healthy BMI. General population, 18.5-24.9 kg/m², South Asian or Chinese descent, 18.5 and 22.9 kg/m². Orlistat an option (as below).
- Dietary advice: Advise the right amount of calories for the level of activity (daily usually: men 2,500 cals., women 2,000 cals). Most adult/some children have too many calories from carbs. Ensure protein intake adequate. **Satiety: protein > fat > carbs.** Ensure ≥ 3 fruit & veg/day. Cut down on saturated fat (eg butter, cheese, cakes, sausages) to < 30g men, 20g women. Cut down on sugars. Salt < 6g/day. Carbs: more complex. Don’t confuse thirst with hunger. Smaller regular meals. Don’t skip breakfast.
- Metformin: HbA1c rising despite participation intensive lifestyle program or unable to participate. Particularly if BMI > 35. Explain long-term lifestyle change can be more effective than drugs in preventing or delaying T2DM. Continue lifestyle advice. Check renal function before Rx, then x2 yearly or more. Start low dose (eg 500 mg od), increase to 1500–2000 mg daily. If intolerant, consider metformin MR. Prescribe for 6–12 months. Monitor HbA1c or fasting plasma glucose at 3-month intervals and stop the drug if no effect.
- Orlistat: Use clinical judgement on whether to offer orlistat if BMI ≥ 28.0 kg/m² for obesity. Discuss benefits & side effects. Advise low-fat diet (<30% daily energy as fat, over 3 main meals). Review use after 12 weeks. If weight loss not at least 5%, stop Rx. Use orlistat for > 12 months, only after discussing benefits & side-effects

Diabetes Remission Protocol (DIRECT Study):
- If diabetes duration < 6 yrs: 830 cal diet for around 12 weeks (calories from: protein 26%, fat 13%, carbs 61%). Then 400 cal. meals introduced. Vitamins and minerals replete. Off all anti-diabetic and anti-hypertensive Rx. Optimal Physical Activity advised (ideally 15000 steps per day). Relapse with weight gained treated.
- 86% chance of remission at 1 year if ≥15kg weight loss. 57% remission if 10-15kg weight loss.

Blood pressure: National Diabetes Audit target < 140/80, ≤ 130/80 if kidney, eye or any CV

* Step 1: Age < 55 yrs: A (ACEI or ARB), ≥ 55 yrs or African-Caribbean C (Ca²⁺ blocker) or D (indapamide)
* Step 2: A + D or A + C
* Step 3: A + C + D
* Step 4: Add K⁺ sparing diuretic (e.g. spironolactone) or α-blocker (doxazosin) or β-blocker (eg bisoprolol)

Cholesterol: NDA < 5mmol/L, NICE > 40% reduction in non-HDL Chol. Secondary Prevention

Primary Prevention: Type 1 DM:
- Atorvastatin 20mg od if >40years or duration > 10 years or established nephropathy or other CV risk factors

Primary Prevention: Type 2 DM: Atorvastatin 20mg od if ≥ 10% 10 year CV risk on QRISK2

Secondary Prevention (all): Atorvastatin 80mg od. CVD (MI, angina, stroke, TIA, PVD). Initiate lower dose

Atorvastatin if older, low muscle mass, impaired renal function or patient preference

CKD Patients:
- Atorvastatin 20mg. If > 40% reduction in non-HDL cholesterol not achieved, increase dose. Agree use of high-dose statin with renal specialist if eGFR <

Other Rx: Ezetimibe 10mg and/or Fenofibrate 160mg/200mg may be useful in statin intolerance to reach targets. Hydrophilic Pravastatin and Rosuvastatin less side-effects (simvastatin side-effect profile increased with amlodipine, diltiazem, verapamil, > 250ml of grapefruit juice daily). Bempedoic acid and PCSK9-i: specialist advice.
Figure 2 New care plan was developed with the National Health Service England and National Health Service improvement west midlands our region diabetes expert advisory group, right care, and the pharmacy local professional network. (44 Diabetes service units) showed that 91% of respondent felt that the strategy would have a positive influence on diabetes care and that it would be practical to implement, even in a non-high income country (Table 2)\textsuperscript{13}.  

---

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Target Values</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HbA1c</strong></td>
<td>≤58 mmol/mol (≤7.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**New Type 2 Guidelines: EASD/ADA guidance:** If clinical CVD: SGLT-2i or GLP-1RA with proven CV benefit is recommended. If CKD, Clinical heart failure or High CV risk CVD, a SGLT 2i inhibitor with proven benefit is recommended. GLP-1RA are generally recommended as first injectable Rx.

**Type 1:** Insulin essential to life. Use suitable regime usual basal bolus, premix bd in some patients. Classic symptoms may not be present eg: ketones high, losing weight, marked symptoms with hyperglycaemia > 15 mmol/l. Aim no/minimal hypoglycaemia. DKA avoidance. Safe Driving advice. Consider flash monitoring, CGMS, Pump therapies as per guidelines. **NB:** Metformin is insulin sparing in obese Type 1. Dapagliflozin licensed in Type 1 DM for improving glycaemic control. Watch out for rare euglycaemic DKA – sick day rules essential.

**Eye screening:** Screening for and effective management of Diabetic Retinopathy.
- BP and Glycaemic Control essential.
- Screen annually using a digital retinal camera. Aspirin/ACE-I/ARB in most patients with retinopathy. Consider fenofibrate. - some evidence of reduced need for laser Rx is diagnosed retinopathy. Several national unit use it for maculopathy (FIELD Study reduction in retinal laser and other outcomes by 34%)

**Feet screening:** Foot care advice and Annual review essential by GP, Practice Nurse or podiatrist.
- All risk factors to be controlled aggressively.
- Inspection, pedal pulses, 10g MF testing. If neuropathic or ischaemic, foot-care advice and regular podiatry review essential to prevent ulceration/amputation. Ulcers: refer urgently to MDT Foot At Risk Team.
- In the FIELD Study there was a 36% reduction in amputation using fenofibrate 160mg od. ? consider in individual cases with previous amputation?

**Guardian drugs:**
- **Aspirin 75mg od when BP <150 systolic:** in any atheromatous CVD. Clopidogrel 75 mg if further atheroma events on aspirin or aspirin intolerance.
- **ACEI reduce complications. Ramipril 10mg od consider for most diabetes pts (Best Evidence in T2DM)**
- **ARB:** Microalbuminuria (Best evidence: Irbesartan 300mg od) also if ACE not tolerated. Proteinuria to retard progression to death and ESRD (Best evidence: losartan 100mg od)

**NHS England (West Midlands) Diabetes Expert Advisory Group c/o vinod.patel@warwick.ac.uk**

**NB:** No statins, No ACE-I, No ARBs in Pre-conception or Pregnant, 15% Foetal malformation. Pre-conception Care Essential (Folate 5mg od. Vit D 400 IU) Aim HbA1c% ≤ 7.5% = 58mmol/mol

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**CKD Prevention: Micro Alb:** ACEI, or ARB. Ramipril 10mg daily daily data shows stroke reduction, MACE reduction and mortality reduction by 24%. **Proteinuria:** 20-28% reduction death/ESRD (losartan 100mg od), also SGLT2i.

**Diabetes control: Individually-agreed targets. NDA HbA1c ≤ 58mmol/mol (≤7.5%)**

- **Type 2 Initial Rx:** Lifestyle (optimal diet, optimal weight, physical activity), Metformin 500mg bd, 850mg bd, 1000mg bd (usual doses). Contraindiplate if creat. > 150 umol/l or eGFR < 30 ml/min. Consider B12 check
- **Type 2 First Intensification: Individualise to pt:** If non-obese SU eg: gliclazide start low dose eg 40mg od then titrate eg 80 mg bd, 160 mg bd max- note hypo risk. If obese: SGLT-2i (weight loss). If CKD adjust dose if needed. DDP-4i (weight neutral), Pioglitazone or GLP-1RA sc also options. **Consider Insulin** if ketones high, losing weight, marked symptoms & glucose > 15 mmol/l or very high HbA1c (>86 mmol/mol)
- **Type 2 Second Intensification: Individualise to pt:** Use appropriate 3rd line agent from above choices
- **Type 2 Third Intensification: Individualise to pt:** Appropriate agent from above ? insulin ? GLP-agonist sc
  - Insulin regimes: NPH, giargine, levensir, degludec, tujoeo overnight, biphasic bd, basal bolus regimes.
  - GLP- agonists: once-weekly Semaglutide or Dulaglutide. **Avoid Semaglutide in those with any grade above background retinopathy if on insulin and poor glycaemic control.** Consider instead of insulin or TZD especially if BMI ≥ 30 if problems with ↑ weight, occupation issues, insulin unacceptable or weight loss would benefit co-morbidities
Figure 3 The alphabet strategy care plan. A: Introduction and contacts; B: Personal concerns and goals; C: National diabetes audit data and individualised target; D: Drugs and pharmacist reviews.
### Treatment Changes during Ramadan

- As you know some treatments will need adjusting, for example, some drugs need changing as you cannot drink fluids as normal.
- We would advise you to change your treatment as below
- **Please go back to your normal times and doses after Ramadan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Treatment</th>
<th>Ramadan Sehri (morning)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iftar (evening)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

For further details contact
Diabetes Nurses: 024-76865210
Multi-Lingual Co-Worker: 024-76865595

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### Ramadan and Diabetes

**Fasting safely during the Holy month of Ramadan**

- The Diabetes Care Team would like to help you Fast safely during Ramadan. We provide Ramadan diabetes advice in the local community and also at the hospital.
- Over-eating during Ramadan and Eid can increase your blood sugars and make you put on weight.
- Fasting allows you to abstain from smoking; Ramadan is a good time to stop smoking!
- Eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- Ramadan is a good time to make small lifestyle changes. These changes will help you to have good control of your diabetes and reduce chance of a heart attack or stroke

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### Diet

- When you open your Fast limit the amount of sweet foods such as dates, milkshakes, jelabi and burfi.
- At Sehri and Iftar time eat more starchy foods, such as basmati rice, chapatti, brown bread and cereals.
- Eat more fruit, vegetables, dhal and low fat yoghurts.
- All drinks should be sugar-free, avoid adding sugar to tea and coffee. Limit the amount of salt you add to food.
- To avoid dehydration make sure you drink plenty of water before starting the Fast.
- When you break your Fast, try not to have too many fried foods such as samosas, paratha and pakoras!

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### Medication

- During Ramadan it is very important to keep taking your regular tablets. Some tablets will need adjusting.
- Your tablets will keep your blood glucose in control and keep you feeling well.
- If you decide to Fast and you are on insulin, you will need to be very careful, your insulin dose will need to change. Do not stop your insulin.
- **For further advice contact the diabetes team at the hospital or your own GP.**

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### Diabetes Control

- Check your blood glucose regularly, it should be between 4 – 7
- When your blood glucose drops below 4, you may be at risk of having a hypo. You may feel weakness, sweating, trembling, tingling in the lips and fingers and slurred speech. If this happens then you must take 2-3 glucose tablets followed by a snack.

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**Figure 4 Ramadan advice leaflets.** This includes a table to state what change in medication may be needed during Ramadan.
CONCLUSION

In United Kingdom, care planning for all patients with chronic diseases has been proposed as an agreed action plan which is best reflected by the slogan—“no decisions about me without me”\cite{17}. The 15 diabetes healthcare essentials introduced for the diabetes patients not only help in better management outcomes, but also help prevent serious future complications due to the disease\cite{18}. One of the parts of the Year of Care programme for diabetes tested the “house of care” concept, which involves care and support planning at its core surrounded and supported by all the teams, tools and management plans\cite{19}. The AS helps deliver these aspirations. The strategy is also compatible with helping implement other key national guidelines and recent changes in clinical practice\cite{15,20-22}.

AS for diabetes care is intended to improve the confidence of the person with diabetes to self-manage their condition with the aspirations and the constraints of the life they lead. We are confident that it has the great potential to reduce the morbidity and mortality due to diabetes in these most difficult of times internationally due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All our resources are available electronically, gratis, on request. These resources are available to adapt to local clinical practice as HCP and patients see fit.
## Diabetes Care Referral Criteria: COVID-19 Times

In all cases referral depends on expertise of Primary Care. In many cases, discussion will ensue with a secondary care colleague or the Community Diabetes Specialist Nurse. Format is similar to that adopted by the “Think Glucose” Campaign and the Portsmouth “Super 6” Service Model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary care</th>
<th>In-patient care</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Referral</td>
<td>Early Referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Inpatient diabetes*</td>
<td>1. Hyperglycaemia: glucose &gt; 12 on treatment, in pregnancy if glucose &gt; 5.5 pre-meals and &gt;7.7 after meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To optimise control and safely discharge</td>
<td>- DKA/Hyperglycaemic Hyperosmolar state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Foot ulceration, Charcot, infection</td>
<td>- Severe hyperglycaemia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Type 1 DM, all adolescents*</td>
<td>- Admission for urgent/ major elective surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- All new Type 1 diabetes patients</td>
<td>- Acute coronary syndrome or Sepsis or Severe</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Insulin Pump services*</td>
<td>- Vomiting or Impaired consciousness</td>
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<tr>
<td>- New Therapies eg GLP-1 injectables + insulin</td>
<td>- Unable to self manage</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Creatinine &gt; 150 umol/l or CKD ≥ 3</td>
<td>- Previous diabetes problem as inpatient</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Proteinuria: UACR &gt; 30mmol/mol</td>
<td>- IV insulin infusion glucose outside limits</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Optimize risk factors then renal referral</td>
<td>- IV insulin for over 48 hrs</td>
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<td>4. Antenatal diabetes*</td>
<td>- Parenteral or enteral nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Any diabetes patient or Gestational DM</td>
<td>- Fluid and electrolyte balance</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Pre-conception Care: asap much neglected</td>
<td>- Foetal growth and development</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Other Possible Criteria:</td>
<td>- Fetal monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>- All patients pre Surgery with HbA1c% &gt; 8.5%</td>
<td>- Fetal monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>72mmol/mol</td>
<td>- Fetal monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Individualised “Poorly controlled”:</td>
<td>- Fetal monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>- HbA1c% &gt; 9% (75 mmol/mol)</td>
<td>- Fetal monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>- BP &gt; 140/90</td>
<td>- Fetal monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>- T: Chol &gt; 5 mmol/l or LDL &gt; 3</td>
<td>- Fetal monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>- DM Acute CHD or Stroke (last 3 months)</td>
<td>- Fetal monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Severe hyperglycaemia (episode requiring 3rd</td>
<td>- Fetal monitoring</td>
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### References


4. **National Diabetes Audit.** Report 1 Care Processes and Treatment Targets 2018-2019. [Cited

Figure 5 Diabetes care referral criteria.