

2016 Cape Town Declarations of Action on Diabetic Foot Ulcers and Insulin Access

Saving Limbs, Saving Lives and #insulin4all

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The WCET™ recently held its very successful 21th Congress in Cape Town, South Africa. WCET™ nursing practice involves the prevention and treatment of skin and wound problems. Advocating for care models that can enhance the treatment of wounds or prevent them entirely is therefore an important part of the work of WCET™.

IIWCC NGO SUMMIT

As part of the planning for the WCET™ Congress, the International Interprofessional Wound Care Course (IIWCC) coincided with the final residential week for 12 graduating South African students, a reunion with IIWCC-ZA alumni from 2010-2015, and a Summit of Non-Government Agencies (NGOs) active in diabetic foot care issues in Africa. NGO participants included:

- Santé Diabète, the largest international NGO working on diabetes prevention and care in Africa (www.santediabete.org/en/). Stéphane Besançon, founder and president, represented the group.
- International Diabetes Federation (IDF). The mission of IDF is to promote diabetes care, prevention and a cure worldwide (www.idf.org/). Dr. Belma Malanda represented the IDF.
- Diabetes African Foot Initiative (DAFI). An IDF sponsored initiative; DAFI is active in 10 African countries (www.idf.org/diabetes-africa-foot-initiative), Dr. Zulfiqarali Abbas, leader of the DAFI, represented the group.
- Médecins Sans Frontières /Doctors Without Borders (MSF) represented by James Elliott. MSF is an international medical humanitarian organization (www.msf.ca/). MSF is active throughout Africa and increasingly treating people with diabetes and diabetic foot related health issues
- Addis Ababa University represented by Dr. Helen Yifter, an endocrinologist active in the treatment of diabetic foot in Ethiopia. Helen is also a graduate of the IIWCC in Africa and a member of the University of Toronto-Addis Ababa Academic Collaboration.
- T1International, an NGO dedicated to adequate access to insulin, diabetes supplies, medical care and education for all people living with type 1 diabetes (<http://t1international.com/>). T1International was also represented by James Elliott, a trustee of the organization.
- The International Interprofessional Wound Care Course (IIWCC), represented by Course Director Dr. R. Gary Sibbald, course coordinator Dr. Elizabeth A. Ayello, and sub-Saharan Africa coordinator Hiske Smart.

The meetings produced two Cape Town Declarations of Action: 1). Insulin Access for Africa - *#insulin4all* (figure 1) and, 2). Saving Diabetic Feet in Africa - *Saving Limbs, Saving Lives* (figure 2).

WCET EXECUTIVE ENDORSES THE CAPE TOWN DIABETES DECLARATIONS

Diabetes mellitus is a treatable chronic disease. Appropriate management can help prevent complications, such as diabetic foot ulcers and amputations. The rising rate of diabetes worldwide is a global health problem that warrants the attention of all health care professionals. In 2014 the global prevalence of diabetes was estimated to be 9% among adults aged 18+ years.¹ About 350 million people worldwide have diabetes, a number likely to more than double in the next 20 years.² Although type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented, research suggests eating a healthy diet, taking part in regular physical activity, maintaining normal body weight and avoiding tobacco smoking may prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes, the most common type.³

In Africa, 5 million deaths are caused annually from diabetes or its complications, surpassing the 1.5 million deaths from each of AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (4.5 million in total).^{2,3} One of the disparities of health care is that more than 80% of deaths from diabetes mellitus occur in low and middle-income countries.^{2,4} Also of great concern is the World Health Organization (WHO) prediction that diabetes will be the 7th leading cause of death in 2030.⁴

While in Cape Town the WCET Executive Board members had the opportunity to meet with key members of several NGOs dedicated to bringing awareness to the problems that persons with diabetes are facing in Africa. At that time, the WCET Executive Board was approached to sign onto the 2016 Cape Town Declarations of Action (see figures 1 and 2). The WCET Executive Board circulated those Declarations at the WCET™ conference stand in Cape Town. Cape Town was selected by the NGOs as the appropriate launch pad for the 2016 Declarations of Action on Diabetic Foot Ulcers, as in 2002, a declaration on HIV/AIDS was released from another gathering in Cape Town and it changed the course of HIV/AIDS treatment in Africa.⁶

It is our hope that these declarations will have the same effect and improve access to insulin as well as lead to appropriate prevention and treatment for persons with diabetes in Africa. We hope that WCET™ nurses will support this important declaration so that

foot ulcers and lower limb amputations can be avoided. Please circulate and share these two declarations as widely as possible.

References

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