

# News from

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Embargoed: 00:01 Tuesday, 11 September 2007

## PHARMACISTS PROVEN A VITAL RESOURCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DIABETES

Turning to a community pharmacist for help in treating type 2 diabetes can significantly improve patients' health, according to new research launched at the British Pharmaceutical Conference (BPC) in Manchester.

Pharmacist Ali Al-Blawi at Bradford University investigated the impact on health outcomes to patients with type 2 diabetes attending a diabetes clinic, and found there were significant improvements in those patients receiving help from a pharmacist. In many cases, patients received counselling and education, dosage adjustments and therapeutic regimen changes, which improved outcomes for patients.

The results showed that:

- **62%** of patients reported increased knowledge about their disease
- **a third** of patients reported increased satisfaction with their treatment, and
- **almost a quarter** said their quality of life had improved.

Professor Henry Chrystyn, Professor of Clinical Pharmacy at University of Bradford said: "Our results prove that community pharmacists have become a valuable asset in managing diabetes and that they contribute to improved health outcomes for patients."

Around **two million** Britons have type 2 diabetes and an estimated additional 700,000 have the condition and don't know it.<sup>1</sup> Diabetes occurs when either the body does not produce enough insulin (a hormone that controls blood sugar, or glucose, levels), or when the insulin that is produced does not work properly.

The symptoms of diabetes include increased thirst, needing to urinate often, extreme tiredness, blurred vision, weight loss, genital itching and slow wound healing. The symptoms are less pronounced among patients with type 2 diabetes.

Pharmacists have become increasingly involved in diabetes management in recent years. In 2004, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) published new Practice Guidance on the *Care of People with Diabetes* (incorporating “early identification” guidance), which was endorsed by the charity, Diabetes UK.

Paul Gimson, Lead Pharmacist for Long Term Care at the RPSGB, said: “The Government strategy *Choosing Health Through Pharmacy*, and the National Diabetes Support Team have also previously recognised pharmacy as a vital network for supporting public health in the area of diabetes.

“The RPSGB continues to urge health commissioners to consider the potential benefit of pharmacy when designing services, and encourages the public to consider the advice their pharmacist can provide in identifying and supporting their management of diabetes.”

**Ends**

**For media enquiries please contact:**

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's Public Relations Unit:

Tel: 020 7572 2335 or 020 7572 2336

The British Pharmaceutical Conference Press Office (**September 10, 11 and 12 only**)

Tel: 0161 839 9170

Tel: 0161 839 9173

Tel: 0161 839 9164

Tel: 0161 832 2023

Tel: 0161 832 1090

Mobile: 07739 533 658

ISDN: 0161 833 4751

**Notes to editors**

34 patients with type 2 diabetes were recruited and 28 (12 study and 16 control) completed the study. Their mean age was 59 years. 71% were South Asians.

Patients were randomly placed in control and study research groups. Control patients received the usual care offered by the clinic, the study patients received special pharmaceutical care plans which were reviewed by a pharmacist at three, six and 12 months.

In most cases, type 2 diabetes is linked with being overweight and usually occurs in people over the age of 40. People of South Asian and African-Caribbean decent often develop type 2 diabetes after the age of 25. Recently, more children are being diagnosed with the condition, some as young as seven. [A results table is available on request.](#)

The British Pharmaceutical Conference - entitled "[The medicines maze: balancing risks and benefits](#)" - takes place from 10th to 12th September, 2007, at Manchester Central (formerly Manchester International Convention Centre). The theme of BPC 2007 is reflected throughout the programme, with keynote speeches and workshops addressing crucial technical and professional issues that are facing pharmacy today. The conference will showcase the latest developments in pharmaceutical science and practice research and include discussion and debate led by expert speakers.

### **References**

1. Diabetes UK (website reference)
2. Tadros L, Ledger-Scott M. & Barnes, E. The Benefits of a Pharmacist-Led Type 2 Diabetes Clinic. *Hospital Pharmacist* 2002;9:204-206.