

TACKLING DIABETES ... WITH THE NOSE TOO

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Hypoglycemia is a common side effect of intensive insulin management amongst patients with type 1 and 2 diabetes.

It can be very distressing, and puts diabetics at risk of serious neurological and cardiovascular complications especially when they missed the early warning signs of impending blood glucose changes (N.J.Rooney et al., 2019)

For people living with diabetes , having a reliable tool which can signal dangerous highs and lows is key.

Over time, patients with type 1 and 2 diabetes become unaware of the signs and symptoms of Hypo: Hypo - unawareness leads to morbidity and, eventually, death.

Diabetics, who take insulin, live in constant fear of the risk of losing consciousness because of low blood sugar.

Devices, called Continuous Glucose Monitors (CGMs) can alert wearers to dropping levels, but not everyone has access to them.

And even among those who have such a choice, there are a few who prefer a furrier and friendlier alert option: a service dog specially trained to alert owners when their blood sugar reaches dangerously low levels can be of great benefit.

Owing to a specific and very specialized training, these new “lifesaving dogs” are able to give diabetics warning signals, enabling them to report in advance on the insurgence of hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia, metabolic conditions harmful to patients in both the short and the long term. Thanks to their sophisticated olfactory system, dogs can detect molecules anticipating malaise linked to one or the other of the above-mentioned pathological conditions.

Within this monitoring activity, the dog acts in conjunction with the electro-medical instruments currently in use.

An important goal of Service in the fight against diabetes, could be, therefore, that of supporting applied research aimed at identifying dogs' inclusion criteria and evidence based training protocols with measurable results, through the employment of scientific teaching methods.

It would be important for Lions to get actively involved in offering real and practical help, both at national and international level, to the research in this field, which, while still in the initial phase of study and requiring in-depth implementations, has great potential for development on a large scale.

Recommendation:

Given the novelty and the encouraging results of the method discussed, I would like to ask Lions European Council to: recommend MD, D, Undistricted Clubs and Leo Clubs to

- a) Motivate clubs to explore in their meetings new ways of tackling diabetes;
- b) Include in their programs a dedicated service;
- c) Draw the attention of the young (type 1 and 2 diabetes electively affects young people) and of institutions in their own area, to broaden the scope of applied science in the field and support DAD's dedicated associations and families

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