

Early detection, evaluation and therapy can avoid Diabetes complications

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On account of World Diabetes Day (WDD) marked on 14th November, Dr Ben Ng who is an Endocrinologist based in Singapore shares his insights on combating type 2 diabetes with SOLIQUA, a powerful agent which offers excellent sugar reducing capabilities



World Diabetes Day (WDD) is marked on 14th November by IDF and WHO in response to growing concerns about the escalating health threat posed by diabetes. The estimated diabetes mellitus (DM) prevalence worldwide for 2011 was 366 million people and is expected to increase to 552 million by 2030. With over half of the global diabetic population residing in the APAC region, the prevalence rates put a considerable financial burden on the healthcare budget of each country. Increasing evidence shows that the progression from impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) to type 2 diabetes occurs more frequently in Asians compared with Caucasians. Furthermore, IGT is independently associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and should be managed at the earliest. Pharmaceutical industries are rigorously working to combat the prevalence and the control of diabetes due to its increasing concerns. Dr Ben Ng, Endocrinologist, ARDEN Endocrinology Specialist Clinic, Mount Elizabeth Novena Specialist Centre, Singapore, outlines on the diabetic epidemic, prevention, and treatment in conjunction with the launch of Sanofi's latest breakthrough drug for uncontrolled diabetes, SOLIQUA®.

How do you address Asia's fast-growing diabetes epidemic?

I think it's important to appreciate that diabetes can potentially be a devastating condition if not picked up or treated correctly. However, with proper management, evaluation and therapy, the majority of diabetes-related complications can be avoided and its risks potentially reduced. The earlier the condition is detected and treated, the better the outcome.

Therefore, when it comes down to type 2 diabetes, prevention is always better than cure and hence, early detection and timely intervention is critical in dealing with this condition.

The challenge with many patients who are diagnosed at a later stage of diabetes, despite being adherent to lifestyle and dietary intervention including taking the regular medication and insulin, a significant proportion of this patient remained poorly controlled putting them at high risk of developing diabetes-related complications such as eye, kidney, nerve and heart disease.

What are the latest developments in diabetes prevention and cure in APAC?

Particularly in Singapore, there are many recent initiatives that are designed to help prevent diabetes, on both the individual and national level. For instance, as part of the Singapore war on diabetes, there has been a recent ban on advertisements promoting packaged drinks with high sugar content. There are also numerous health apps now available to help people monitored your overall exercise and food consumption making them more health-conscious and aware of the diet and exercise. Unfortunately, diabetes is a chronic disease and can progress over time. Although in recent years, metabolic surgery has been advocated for a selected group of patients to halt or reverse the condition, medication and lifestyle therapy remains by far the most common method of treating diabetes. One of the latest therapies available in Singapore to help combat the diabetes burden is SOLIQUA.

Can you briefly share the efficacy, safety and tolerability of SOLIQUA as seen in clinical trials?

SOLIQUA® is the first-of-its-kind treatment in Singapore to help adults with type 2 diabetes have better control over their blood sugar levels in a simple, single daily injection. It is a powerful agent which is indicated adults with type 2 diabetes to improve their sugar control particularly when oral therapy is insufficient. SOLIQUA® is made up of two treatments which are effective in managing diabetes – long-acting insulin and a GLP-1 RA [receptor agonist]. These two parts have been shown to have a complementary mode of action which keeps blood sugar within the patient's target levels.

How advantageous is SOLIQUA® over conventional Insulin to patients suffering from uncontrolled diabetes?

SOLIQUA® is a powerful agent which offers excellent sugar reducing capabilities. It is injected once a day which makes it easier for patients to manage.

How do you project your future ventures in treating diabetes?

I think increasingly, people are getting more aware of diabetes and its associated complications. The recognition of the Singapore government on the severity of this condition and its efforts in providing practical and effective support in lowering the risk is extremely welcomed by the medical community as a whole. However, moving forward, I think more normal therapy is clearly required. Diabetes can be a lifelong condition and as people continue to live longer, we need treatments which are both easy to administer, effective with minimal risks to the patient's with regards to side effects and ensure side effects on other organs.

Furthermore, as food technology develops, food alternate is which are healthier, cost-effective need to be developed to enable the community to better choose the right kind of food which can for a lower risk of diabetes and have less impact on your blood sugars.

What would be your message on account of World Diabetes Day on 14 November?

The theme for world diabetes day 2019 is again "the family and diabetes ". The aim of this will be to raise awareness of the impact of diabetes on the family and the need for an effective network for all dose affected. I would encourage anyone who is at risk of diabetes or has a family member with diabetes to be aware that diabetes can be a long-term condition and support from all the family and community is required if you ever going to be able to tackle this disease successfully.