

# Putting patients at the heart of Type 2 research

Diabetes UK's Priority Setting Partnership (PSP) has just announced its top 10 research priorities for Type 2 diabetes. **Professor Andrew Farmer**, who was part of the PSP steering group, explains why this is such an exciting development

**I**nvolving people with Type 2 diabetes in setting research priorities, as has been done with the PSP, is now considered really good practice. As a GP, I have always aimed to involve my patients in decisions about the sort of care they want. And, as I became more involved in research, I was able to encourage patients to participate in the development and oversight of studies and trials. I was the first Clinical Lead of the NIHR Thames Valley Diabetes Local Clinical Research Network, where I supported the formation of a now well-established patient group. I have also worked with public and patient representatives in my roles as former Panel Chair for the Programme for Grants for Applied Research and currently as Chair of the NIHR Health Technology Assessment General Board.

I've been involved with Diabetes UK for a long time now – most recently on the PSP Steering Group. The charity always makes sure that people with diabetes have a strong voice and the PSP initiative shows this very clearly. The Steering Group looked at all 8,000 of the questions contributed to the PSP, and had really sound and robust debates to make sure the whole process was fair and open. It has been really interesting to see those topics that made it through to the top 10 as priorities. I am particularly pleased to see an emphasis on self-management and preventing Type 2 diabetes getting worse. Going forward,

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**BIOGRAPHY**  
**PROFESSOR ANDREW FARMER**

Andrew Farmer was appointed to his current post of Professor of General Practice at the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford, in 2010. He also works as an associate general practitioner at the South Oxford Health Centre and is a Research Associate of the Oxford Diabetes Trials Unit. Prof Farmer's research interests include delivering improvements to the care of people with long-term conditions, such as diabetes. Much of his work has centered on improving the self-management of diabetes in general practice, including researching where blood glucose monitoring is helpful, supporting people in making best use of their medicines, and developing and testing new digital health systems.

partnership between people with diabetes and healthcare professionals will continue to be the basis of turning these priorities into research that leads to patient benefit.

In the article that follows, Faye Riley writes about our top 10 research priorities in detail. She briefly describes the state of play on each topic and why it is so important for those treating and living with Type 2 diabetes to know more. The optimism and commitment of all those involved in the PSP has underpinned the process, and I believe this list of priorities marks a milestone in the development of partnership with patients and the wider public in Type 2 diabetes research.

## The future

All of the top 10 PSP choices are exciting and, importantly, practical and doable through a mixture of lifestyle, public health planning and medication. Between them, the selected priorities cover all of the important areas of diabetes care, so they provide a broad and comprehensive programme for researchers to tackle. In the next five to 10 years, we will develop methodologies to deliver high-quality research results quickly and efficiently. In particular, I believe that new developments in electronic health records will allow us to address some of the really important research questions that need data on a wide scale. We already have plenty of data on Type 2 diabetes and we are now in a much better position to interrogate it than we were 10 years ago, through better use of more powerful computers.

I look forward to Diabetes UK continuing to invest in high-quality research, and now being able to place special emphasis on the 10 areas that the PSP exercise has identified. At the same time, the charity will do all it can to raise awareness of these 'hot topics' among researchers, industry, research funders and other stakeholders to ensure they receive the attention they deserve.

With this approach, I believe we can work together to generate the maximum benefit for people who have, or who are at risk of, Type 2 diabetes.