

THE LAST WORD

ONE UPDATE READER HAS HIS SAY



Dr Farooq Ahmad

GP and North Locality Director, Merton Federation

Describe your role in 50 words

I am a full-time GP working in a busy south London practice. Being the diabetes expert, I oversee the care of our diabetes cohort, with help from my practice and community diabetes nurse. Furthermore, I have a role as one of the directors of our GP Federation in Merton.

How did you come to be interested in diabetes?

More than 10 years ago, I attended a south-west London diabetes meeting where colleagues were presenting what they had achieved in diabetes care in their own borough. I was dismayed that we had not really focused on diabetes care in Merton and, since then, I have made it my priority to improve care and raise the profile of diabetes in our area.

What is the best thing about your role? And the most challenging?

It is always a great pleasure when you can see the change in patients' health when they understand that they have the power to change their condition. It is most challenging to see the variation in diabetes care, where some practices are very good at following the nine care processes and some aren't. This variation in care will, I hope, be ironed out by new incentive schemes.

What have you achieved recently in diabetes care that you are excited about and keeps you motivated?

As a Federation director, I have worked

with our local clinical commissioning group (CCG) to roll out a new local incentive scheme to enhance collaborative working and strengthen relationships between GP practices, networks and the community provider for diabetes, to deliver a seamless, integrated and holistic service at scale across Merton and Wandsworth.

I continue to work closely with the Health Improvement Network for South London to embed the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme locally and have also campaigned for ethnicity specific structured education for people with diabetes.

Tell us about any involvement you have with Diabetes UK

I was one of the first cohort of Clinical Champions for Diabetes UK and have been involved in interviewing and mentoring future Clinical Champions. I am proud to have piloted Information Prescriptions in my surgery, for which we were nominated for an innovation award. I also organised a training needs analysis of clinicians in my local CCG and am in the process of setting up a pathway of services, and a clear and simple medication algorithm for Diabetes for Merton clinicians.

I'd like to say that there is a huge resource of wealth and support within the Clinical Champions Programme. I was one of the first and I am still in touch with the other alumni and everyone is still doing something interesting around diabetes. We now

have an instant bond when we meet at conferences or other events. The networking aspect is great and I think the newer Clinical Champions will find it's the same for them too.

Compose a Tweet-style comment for us about the one thing that could improve diabetes care in the NHS

Diabetes can be prevented and, indeed, put into remission with early diagnosis, education, and optimisation of lifestyle modification, including diet and exercise.

What's coming up next for you at work?

A digital 'front door' for primary care with online access for consultation, including video consultation, improved self-care with digital apps, and targeted advice. I am confident that this will help all people with long-term conditions, including people with diabetes.

What do you think is the most exciting thing on the horizon for diabetes care?

There are a lot of exciting developments in prevention, remission, and treatment of diabetes. Recently I have been very impressed with the result from the DiRECT study and am one of the contributors helping Diabetes UK devise an Information Prescription for putting diabetes into remission.

I've also been involved in promoting Flash glucose monitoring both locally and nationally and I'm pleased with how that is progressing. There are also some fantastic medications with amazing positive cardiovascular benefits, as well as a number of digital solutions for education and advice for people with diabetes.

And finally, what do you do to relax outside of work?

I enjoy walking in the Surrey hills and occasionally going to far-flung places to attend rock concerts. I find it relaxing to watch films with my family, and we're 'foodies' – we love to eat out!

Any final thoughts to share with Update readers?

Each patient with diabetes needs a personalised approach to help them understand their condition and empower them to look after themselves better.