

Addressing Health Inequalities in Diabetes Care

Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in the health status of different groups of people or communities. Diabetes affects millions of people worldwide, but not everyone experiences it in the same way. Health inequalities in diabetes care has been widely reported for those from ethnic minority groups, those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and for those with other protected characteristics such as gender or sexuality. These disparities can impact access to care, treatment outcomes, and overall well-being.

In 2022, Diabetes UK held a workshop to discuss how research could help address some of these health inequalities. Following this, a report was published with a series of recommendations from the workshop and insight from people living with diabetes, highlighting their priorities for research. This highlight notice inviting researchers to apply for funding for projects in this area is the next step in our work to help address health inequalities in diabetes care.

We would especially like to see applications with a particular focus on the following areas:

1. Facilitating innovation
 - Improving equal access to diabetes innovations, new treatments and technologies in underserved groups
 - Using positive outcomes from previous studies to apply to new models of care
2. Poverty and diabetes
 - Gaining a better understanding of how poverty impacts people living with diabetes and the development of long-term interventions to address this.
3. Complications of diabetes and multiple long-term conditions
 - Gaining a better understanding and improving care for people living with diabetes and other simultaneous health conditions common in underserved groups such as sickle cell disease/ trait, depression, dementia.
4. Sex and gender
 - Gaining a better understanding of experiences of people living with diabetes and menopause, particularly in underserved communities.
 - Gaining a better understanding of people living with diabetes and menstruation and sexual health, particularly in underserved communities.
 - Looking at the impact of diabetes and pregnancy, especially answering questions identified by the [James Lind Priority Setting Partnership](#).
 - Understanding the barriers to diabetes screening, prevention and self-management education/ services in men at risk or with type 2 diabetes in underserved groups, and using this to develop strategies to improve access and attendance.
5. Increasing involvement of people experiencing health inequalities in diabetes research

- Exploring ways to enhance the involvement and participation of people in underserved communities in diabetes studies.
- Tackling barriers faced by those in underserved groups to being involved in diabetes research.

“I am thrilled to see this highlight notice from Diabetes UK. It is so important to really try and understand why there are health inequalities in diabetes care. When we truly understand what the issues really are, we can address them.

A good starting point would be to include representatives from underserved communities as partners/leaders in research projects.”

Nana Ocran, DRSG member