

To promote diabetes care, prevention and a cure worldwide

We in the global diabetes community know that the obesity-driven diabetes epidemic is spiralling out of control. We know that obesity rates have risen quickly over the past decades and will continue to do so as more and more communities adopt sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy dietary habits. We see a potentially bleak future. We project the diabetes prevalence rates and resulting health costs in the USA onto the massive populations of countries in Asia and the Indian sub-continent, and shudder at the catastrophic consequences. Readers of *Diabetes Voice* are well aware that people in the developing countries are at increased risk of obesity and diabetes through a combination of the fetal malnutrition and 'forced' rural-urban migration associated with poverty (see article by Claudia Chaufan).

If only adequate resources were available to tackle the situation. But they are not. Indeed, sufficient resources are not in place even to address the needs of the people currently living with diabetes, let alone the many millions who are at risk of developing the condition in the near future. If only the public and those who govern were aware of the health crisis in which they are now ensnared. But they are not. Awareness of diabetes, its causes and its complications remains depressingly low.

While governments in the developed countries seem unwilling to appear draconian in the public health measures they adopt, the fast-food and soft-drink manufacturers continue to market freely their products to our children (see article by Philip James and Neville Rigby). Those who allow them to do so ignore what is all too apparent to the marketeers: adults can make their own choices about whether or not to eat junk food, but children are vulnerable to manipulation (see News in Brief).

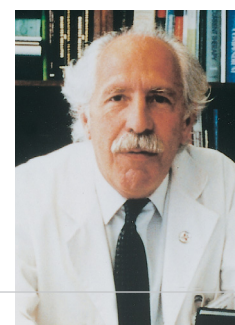
Meanwhile, although millions of people in Africa are expected to develop diabetes over the coming years, governments in the region continue to concentrate health-care funding on communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS (see article by Kaushik Ramaiya). They do so to the detriment of diabetes care and research.

The governmental bodies that make health-care and consumer policies worldwide must be convinced that radical measures are required. IDF is playing a central role in this work. One example is *Diabetes Action Now*, an important new joint IDF-WHO initiative to raise awareness about diabetes and promote its surveillance, prevention and control (see article by Nigel Unwin and Amanda Marlin).

We in the diabetes community know that the way to meet the challenges posed by the diabetes pandemic is through prevention programmes. But simply knowing this is not enough. We have a moral obligation to promote this message to those in a position to facilitate change.

At the grass-roots level, many are already doing this work. More than three quarters of IDF Member Associations are now involved in the primary prevention of Type 2 diabetes and most are seeking to reduce the risks of diabetes complications. We must at the same time work to ensure that those living with all forms of diabetes receive the best possible care, and we must remain optimistic that a cure will eventually be found.

These three concerns inform the new mission of IDF. We must use what we know to promote diabetes care, prevention and a cure worldwide.



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pierre Lefèbvre".