

Breakthrough in treatment of Type 2 Diabetes

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Good news for people living with Type 2 Diabetes in time for World Health Day 2016!

Results from the landmark *Barbados Diabetes Reversal Study*, featured in the World Health Organization's [Global report on diabetes](#) [1] released in time for this year's World Health Day, reveal promising evidence that progress is being made on diabetes management strategies.

The *Barbados Diabetes Reversal Study* study found that a combination of diet and exercise can lead to people with Type 2 Diabetes coming off medication and maintaining low blood sugar. *This effectively means that it's possible to put Type 2 Diabetes into remission.*

What needs to be done to achieve such dramatic and promising results?

People with Type 2 Diabetes often need to lose a substantial amount of weight and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

During the study, 25 participants with Type 2 Diabetes, most of whom were on medication, were put on an eight-week low calorie liquid diet. They were later asked to increase their levels of physical activity, and their diabetic medication was stopped.

After the eight weeks, 15 participants had reduced their blood sugar to non-diabetic levels. They also lost a large amount of weight- 10kg on average. As an added benefit, those who had hypertension were able to lower, or even stop, blood pressure medication.

After only 2 months on a modified diet and increased physical activity program, 3/5 study participants with Type 2 Diabetes had reduced blood sugar to non-diabetic levels.

Feeling better

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Participants were generally surprised at how much better they felt on the low-calorie diet and several commented that they had more energy, were less hungry and that the whole thing was easier than they thought it would be. After six months most people had kept the weight off and nearly half have continued to lose weight, with blood sugar control remaining good.

This is clearly of huge potential benefit to Barbados and the region, not only in terms of improving health outcomes but for reducing the cost of the condition over a lifetime. Diabetes is a critical issue across the Caribbean, and in some countries one in four people is living with the condition. In Barbados this figure is around 20% among adults, rising to almost 50% in those over 65.

Next steps

Looking to the future, a clinic will be set up at the Barbados Diabetes Foundation to offer larger numbers of people the same low calorie diet, followed by ongoing long-term support. There is cautious optimism that a way has been found for certain individuals to better manage Type 2 Diabetes, and an eagerness to expand the intervention.

The *Barbados Diabetes Reversal Study* was funded by *Virgin Unite*, Sir Richard Branson's charitable foundation and Sir Richard was in Barbados to launch the study in December 2014. He was joined by Professor Roy Taylor, who pioneered this approach to putting Type 2 Diabetes into remission in the UK.

Professor Taylor acted as the overall scientific adviser for the study which has generated a great deal of interest internationally. The study will be published in greater detail soon.

First WHO Global Report on Diabetes

Details of the *Barbados Diabetes Reversal Study* are featured in the [World Health Organization's](#) [2] 2016 [Global report on diabetes](#) [3] published to coincide with [World Health Day](#) [4] on 7th April 2016. The full report is available below, and at the [WHO website](#) [1] in English, where further information and report summaries are also available in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish.

Barbados #Diabetes Reversal Study suggests some Type 2 Diabetes can effectively be put into remission

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Enlaces

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- [2] <http://www.who.int/en/>
- [3] http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/204871/1/9789241565257_eng.pdf?ua=1
- [4] <http://who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2016/en/>
- [5] <https://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/fms/programmes/public-health/phstaff/dr-madhuvanti-murphy.aspx>
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