

Patient Support Keep and Copy Series



NO CHILD SHOULD DIE FROM DIABETES

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'LIFE FOR A CHILD' MANAGER VISITS LILLY SOUTH AFRICA TO SHARE GROWING SUCCESS OF SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Dr Graham Ogle, programme manager for the International Diabetes Federation's Life for a Child programme, visited Lilly's Johannesburg head office in April to report on the progress being made helping children with diabetes globally, and to thank Lilly for their support.

The Life for a Child programme was established in 2001 by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), with support from Diabetes Australia and HOPE worldwide.¹ This sustainable support programme helps children with diabetes in developing countries and is currently supporting diabetes services in over 25 countries, 11 of which are in Africa.²

Life for a Child offers assistance to the most needy children at supported diabetes centres, including the provision of sufficient insulin and syringes, blood glucose monitoring, appropriate clinical care and diabetes education in countries where governments do not supply these services free of charge.³

Although it has been nearly 90 years since life-saving diabetes medication became available, insulin is still not reaching many of the world's most vulnerable patients – children with type 1 diabetes. 'No child should die from diabetes, yet many still do. All children with diabetes deserve the best healthcare possible, and the chance to live a full and healthy life. In many developing countries, the average life expectancy of children with diabetes is unknown due to a lack of awareness, education and evidence. In some countries, there are few, if any, long-term survivors of type 1 diabetes', explains Dr Ogle.

Lilly, a global leader in diabetes care for over 80 years, has been involved in the Life for a Child programme for some time, initially through the adoption of employee fundraising efforts to contribute to the programme. Through this, Lilly employees have helped provide insulin, supplies and diabetes education and care to hundreds of children in developing nations.⁴ It was due to this support that Life for a Child was able to start assisting in Africa.

More recently, in 2008, Lilly committed to donating more than 800 000 vials of insulin to the programme. This donation is the biggest medicine donation ever made by Lilly and will eventually provide life-saving medication to as many as 24 000 who currently have no access to dia-

betes treatment.⁵ 'The number of children being assisted through Life for a Child has rapidly increased over the last 12 months, due largely to this donation of insulin by Lilly', said Dr Ogle. Around 3 500 children are now supported, and this will grow to around 9 000 by the end of 2010. 'We are now urgently searching for companies to provide large-scale inexpensive or free test strips to further assist patients globally.'

Johannesburg is also an important hub for Life for a Child as most of the insulin and other provisions donated to many African and Asian countries are distributed from there. While in South Africa, Dr Ogle also met with UTi Pharma, which is responsible for the logistics and transport of supplies.

A diagnosis of type 1 diabetes for any child in any country can be devastating, but more so for children in developing countries. The full cost of complete management for a child with type 1 diabetes (who require insulin to stay alive) in most third-world countries is more than they can afford. In fact, the cost of insulin, syringes and testing strips alone exceeds the annual income of many poor families in these countries. The cost of full care for a patient with type 1 diabetes can be as much as US \$500 to \$700 a year. Furthermore, the IDF estimates that 64% of the world's children under the age of 15 with type 1 diabetes live in low-income countries.²

'We are proud to be associated with Life for a Child and we are inspired by the progress being made by this programme in caring for the most needy, helping them to stay alive and improving their quality of life', said Jacques Blaauw, managing director for Lilly South Africa.

Contact Life for a Child on www.lifeforachild.idf.org

References

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