

# Diabetes mellitus

Janet Gray explains how homeopathy can contribute to the management of this condition, improving quality of life and helping to control complications



*Good general health is important in the management of diabetes*

**D**iabetes mellitus\* is a condition in which the normal mechanism of the body for controlling the level of glucose (sugar) in the blood stream has gone awry. A hormone called insulin, which is produced by the pancreas, is responsible for controlling the movement of sugar, in the form of glucose, across from the blood stream into the individual cells of the body. Intracellular glucose is the “fuel” of the cells, without which they cannot work. In diabetes, either the

pancreatic beta cells fail, and thus insulin is not produced; or the body become insensitive to the action of insulin with the same end result. So diabetes is really a condition of “starvation in the midst of plenty” where the glucose piles up in the blood stream and spills over into the urine, but the individual cells are starved of glucose.

In the case of pancreatic beta cell failure, insulin is the only possible treatment, and must be given regularly by injection. This type of diabetes is known as type 1 diabetes or formerly “insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus”. Let me say at this point that there is no homeopathic alternative to insulin, although some remedies may help to reduce the insulin requirements. People with type 1 diabetes are often quite young at the time of diagnosis, and will often have lost a lot of weight before diagnosis is made.

In the case of the cells being resistant to insulin, management can often be achieved by a healthy diet, regular physical activity, drugs and sometimes insulin – this is type 2 diabetes and used to be known as “non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus”. These people are often in their middle years at time of diagnosis, and are often overweight, and can

thus be helped considerably by dieting and regular physical activity.

## *Management of diabetes*

So where can homeopathy contribute to the management of diabetes? First of all, homeopathic treatment can help improve the general health of a person with diabetes. If a person with diabetes is in good health, his or her insulin requirements will be steady and the blood glucose well controlled. If the general health is poor, it can be very difficult to achieve good control.

This can be helped by administering a “constitutional” remedy, based on the totality of the patient’s symptoms and characteristics. The effect will be to improve the general sense of well-being, to improve diabetes control, and maybe to lower the insulin or drug requirements.

The remedy *Syzygium* (Jambol seeds) has a reputation for a specific effect on diabetes, and can be given in mother tincture, three drops daily in water. I cannot claim much success with this, but a veterinary colleague has reported excellent results in dogs.

Boericke’s *Materia Medica* mentions several other remedies, which cause diabetic symptoms, such as

\*There are other forms of diabetes other than diabetes mellitus, but for the purposes of this article, when diabetes is mentioned it can be assumed that the reference is to diabetes mellitus.

an increased urinary output and the presence of sugar in the urine (glycosuria), in their provings. Uranium nitricum is one of these, and it is associated with great emaciation and fluid retention, thirst, nausea and vomiting. It can be tried in low potency, twice daily.

Phloridzin (obtained from the root of the apple and other fruit trees) is another remedy indicated.

### *Specific complications*

Unfortunately, if the blood glucose level is not well controlled in diabetes, several serious complications can arise. It is important that people with diabetes have regular checks to detect any complications early. However, homeopathy can help to alleviate some of the symptoms of these complications.

### *Neuropathy*

The peripheral nerves can be damaged giving rise to blunting of sensation in the feet and hands. This can be dangerous because minor injuries, such as blisters, will not be felt and will thus be ignored. They can then progress to seriously infected ulcers which will take a long time to heal. I must stress that although homeopathic remedies can help here, they must be used in a complementary and not alternative way, because conventional medicines such as antibiotics may be vital to prevent gangrene from occurring.

The numbness may be helped by Conium (hemlock) especially if this is accompanied by weakness of body and mind, difficulty walking because of trembling and weakness, and dizziness.

Plumbum (lead) may be

useful if the numbness is accompanied by hypersensitivity with neuralgic pains. These pains are better for hard pressure and rubbing, and worse at night.

The infected ulcers can be helped to heal by using Calendula (marigold) both externally as a lotion, and also internally, using a 6c potency twice daily.

### *Nephropathy*

The urine must be regularly checked for the presence of protein which would indicate that the kidneys have become affected. Good diabetes control will minimise the risk of kidney damage.

Unless severe damage has occurred, homeopathic remedies can help renal function. Apis mellifica (the honey bee) can stimulate a good urine flow and improve fluid retention. Natrum muriaticum (salt), Lycopodium (club moss) and Sulphur are all wonderful constitutional medicines which can improve renal function if the patient fits the type.

### *Thrush*

Although not a life-threatening complication, recurrent thrush can make life pretty miserable. Again good blood glucose control minimises the problem, but there are several homeopathic remedies which can help with the symptoms.

The one I most commonly use is a potency of the fungal organism itself, Candida. I use Candida 30c three times a day until the symptoms remit. This also tends to prevent recurrences.

Other useful remedies are:

- Helonias (unicorn root): Profuse, thick, creamy

discharge. Severe itching and soreness.

- Kreosotum: Smelly, yellow-staining discharge. Rawness and itching.

### *Erectile dysfunction (impotence)*

This is a problem that causes a lot of distress, and for which there is no easy conventional solution. Good diabetes control is of the essence, but homeopathic treatment can also help.

Again, I would use a constitutional remedy wherever possible, with the addition of the following remedies in low potency:

- Coca (divine plant of the Incas) – especially where associated with exhaustion and palpitations. Irritable, prefers to be alone.
- Phosphoric acid – mental debility. Cannot maintain an erection. Testicles tender and swollen.
- Moschus (musk) intense desire, but impotence. Fainting fits – tends to be hysterical. Worse for cold. Desire for stimulants.

### *Arteriopathy*

People with diabetes in the past were put on diets rich in fats to compensate for the sugar and carbohydrate that they could not eat. It is now realised that this is not necessary and nowadays people with diabetes have much healthier diets, low in fats and with an average carbohydrate content. It is possible therefore that the high rate of atherosclerosis (furring of the arteries) seen in people with diabetes is as a result of their diet, and not of the disease itself.

Atherosclerosis causes heart disease, stroke, poor circulation in the limbs and kidney damage. Hopefully the incidence of these



complications will now reduce.

I would like to illustrate this complication with a case history. Mr KS (aged 69) came to see me with an infected ulcer on his big toe. It had failed to heal using conventional treatment, including an admission to the hospital for intravenous antibiotics. His other leg had been amputated four years previously after a similar infection could not be controlled.

He was under the care of a vascular surgeon who was very gloomy about his chances of keeping his remaining leg. X-rays showed osteomyelitis of the bone underlying the ulcer, and Doppler studies showed a

very poor circulation in the leg. I treated him with a constitutional remedy (Nuxvomica 1M) for his general health, and he felt better in himself very quickly. I gave him Calendula both internally (6c twice daily) and externally as a lotion to bathe the ulcer. He had Secale 6c twice daily to help the blood circulation.

After two months the ulcer was nearly healed, but the leg became swollen, so I changed him on to Apis 200c, one dose weekly.

The fluid retention resolved, but the leg became very painful and the veins became distended. He had Hamamelis 6c twice daily for this, which helped considerably. Although the

ulcer was by this time very much smaller, it would not completely close, and continued to ooze yellowish pus. He first had Silica 6c twice daily for this, and then Hepar sulph 6c twice daily.

He was finally able to stop all medication after 15 months, with the ulcer fully healed, and the leg pain-free and a good colour.

People with diabetes should let their healthcare team know if they are using homeopathic treatments in conjunction with their conventional medicine.

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## Useful contacts

### Diabetes UK

Diabetes UK is the leading charity working for people with diabetes. They fund research, campaign and help people to live with the condition. Their mission is to improve the lives of people with diabetes and to work towards a future without diabetes.

Contact details: [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)  
or tel: 0845 120 2960 (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm)

### The Diabetes Monitoring Forum

A group of diabetes healthcare professionals committed to helping people with diabetes better understand the role of blood glucose monitoring in diabetes management. A new series of leaflets has just been launched by the Forum in support of appropriate prescribing of blood glucose test strips, to offer more individually tailored advice on blood glucose monitoring. Six of the leaflets are for adults and there is one leaflet for parents with a child with type 1 diabetes.

For more information on the Forum, or to request the leaflets call 01483 861300 or email [info@dmforum.org](mailto:info@dmforum.org)

### Diabetes Research and Wellness Foundation (DRWF)

Essentially an organisation of patients and

their family and friends joining together in a “Diabetes Wellness Network” to help all those afflicted by diabetes.

The charity’s motto is “staying well until a cure is found”. The ultimate goal of DRWF is to find a cure for diabetes.

#### Contact details:

[www.diabeteswellnessnet.org.uk](http://www.diabeteswellnessnet.org.uk)  
or email: [drwf@diabeteswellnessnet.org.uk](mailto:drwf@diabeteswellnessnet.org.uk)  
tel: 023 9263 7808 or fax: 023 9263 6137

### Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF)

As the leading charitable funder and advocate of juvenile (type 1) diabetes research worldwide, JDRF’s mission is to find a cure for diabetes and its complications through the support of research.

Contact details: [www.jdrf.org.uk](http://www.jdrf.org.uk)  
or email: [info@jdrf.org.uk](mailto:info@jdrf.org.uk)  
tel: 020 7713 2030 or fax: 020 7713 2031

### Diabetes Insight

A major UK website, providing access to information on diabetes mellitus that is relevant to the UK, Diabetes Insight was established in April 1996 to provide information for people and families with diabetes in the UK, to help them to manage their diabetes and to lead a normal active life.

Log on to [www.diabetes-insight.info](http://www.diabetes-insight.info)



Janet Gray MA MB BChir MRCGP FFHom DRCOG DFFP, a GP for over 25 years, uses homeopathy in her NHS General Practice in Bristol. She lectures in homeopathy at the Bristol Teaching Centre and has a small private practice near Chippenham.