Diabetes UK's Children's Support Holidays

An Eye-opener

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Introduction

- Diabetes UK (DUK) has numerous Care Events running throughout the year
- These Events take place all over the UK
- As a Diabetes Specialist Registrar (SpR), the Author always yearned to volunteer for the DUK and this became possible at one of the Children Support Holidays
- This holiday took place at the Frontier Centre, Northampton, a 120 acre rural venue (Figure 1)

The Children

- We took care of children with Type 1 diabetes, aged 11–15 years
- The children were divided into 4 groups, with 9 children in each and supported by 5 volunteers
- Their insulin regimes included:
  - twice daily insulins (bd mix or intermediate)
  - four daily insulins (basal-bolus)
  - insulin pumps
- It was exciting to support the children with their:
  - glucose monitoring (Figure 3)
  - carbohydrate counting
  - insulin adjustments
  - hypoglycaemic management
  - insulin pump management
  - intercurrent illnesses
  - diabetes-related education

The Volunteers

- The volunteers, with an age range of 19 to 40 years (Figure 2), comprised of:
  - An Organiser
  - Doctors
  - Nurses
  - Dieticians
  - People with diabetes
  - A Child Welfare Officer
- It was a great opportunity to:
  - team play
  - live for a week amidst diabetic volunteers
  - participate in the activities

The Impact

- For the Children, the Holiday brought about:
  - comradery (Figure 4)
  - confidence building
  - team spirit (Figure 5)
  - improved understanding of diabetes
  - confidence to live away from home
  - dealing with exercise and hypoglycaemia
  - learning new skills (activities)
- For the Author, the Holiday brought about:
  - an understanding of how challenging diabetes management can be on a day-to-day basis, and, therefore, a diabetes health professional should not be judgemental of their patients’ diabetes control during consultations

Figure 1: The Frontier Centre (Photo Source: Google Maps)

Figure 2: The Author (front right) hanging out with the volunteers (Photo credit: Clara Ong)

Figure 3: Glucose Monitoring (Photo Source: DUK)

Figure 4: The Comradery (Photo Source: DUK)

Figure 5: The Team Spirit (Photo Source: DUK)

“This holiday has changed my daughter’s life. This is the best decision I have ever made. My previously dependent daughter is now injecting herself and managing her own diabetes.”

Mother of a child

PLEASE BECOME A VOLUNTEER

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