

Advanced pharmacotherapies and technologies continue to improve diabetics' lives every day

Diabetes is a chronic disease that causes significant challenges for patients. According to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), 24 million adults in Africa currently live with diabetes, and by 2045, the figure is expected to rise by 129% to 55 million.



Source: Supplied. Inrke Erasmus, general manager of VitalAire Diabetes.

A recent IDF report also indicates that diabetes affects approximately 4.5 million people in South Africa, with an estimated 12.8% of the adult population living with the condition.

Although most people living with diabetes receive an official diagnosis, 54% of all adults in Africa with diabetes are undiagnosed. The treatment spectrum for diabetes management has rapidly advanced in recent years, with new approvals, expanded indications, and technological innovations all contributing to developing new approaches to diabetes care.

Regarding diabetes management, there have been significant advancements and innovations in the development of glucose-lowering medications, including an expansive list of insulin preparations that more effectively manage both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. With this expansive list of effective glucose-lowering agents, remarkable progress has also been made in diabetes technology.

Diabetes technologies help people with diabetes manage blood glucose levels, stave off complications, reduce the burden

of living with diabetes, and improve their quality of life.

For many years, people living with diabetes continued to use injectable animal-based insulin, but further advances in treatment have been made recently. Diabetes technology has come a long way. Devices are easier and less invasive, from blood glucose meters and continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) devices to cutting-edge insulin pumps.

For point-of-care purposes, CGM devices and wearable technology makes it easier to track blood glucose levels over time, and are considered the most effective options for diabetes management.

The CGM system consists of a sensor (a small wire catheter inserted under the skin on your arm or abdomen) and a handheld receiver and/or smartphone that displays your glucose data in real-time.

Education on glucose trends invaluable

While self-monitored blood glucose (SMBG) is still the most available form of blood glucose monitoring available in South Africa, significant barriers exist, such as inconvenience and lack of timely and regular feedback.

Furthermore, important information regarding glucose trends and alerts is not available. Real-time CGM has become reliable and has demonstrated efficacy in improving diabetes management of glucose levels daily, having less low blood glucose events, needing fewer finger sticks, and ultimately improving diabetes management by lowering HbA1c and increasing time spent in range (4-10mmol/L).

Advanced pharmacotherapies and technologies have continued to improve patients' lives every day, and each advancement allows people with diabetes to live a little more freely.

In a world where the number of people with diabetes is rising, continued research and development are imperative. Improvement in CGM, therefore, remains an integral part of enhancing diabetes management.

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