

End of year report — *Three cheers for FEND*

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In this editorial, we would like to highlight the significant contribution of the Foundation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND) in promoting clinical academic excellence in diabetes nursing. In-so-doing we will also highlight the ongoing opportunities provided by FEND to encourage and support diabetes nurses in developing important new knowledge to enhance patient care through research. No profession or indeed speciality has credibility unless it is contributing to theory and innovation in its domain of practice. This can be very challenging for diabetes nurses across Europe, as the opportunities and funding to undertake research are scant. Furthermore, many diabetes nurses do not have access to the training that is mandated for undertaking quality research. This can often mean that the potential contribution of diabetes to the enhancement of health delivery is unrealised. Even where there is strong local innovation, without the research networks and infrastructure within our specialty these remain under recognised. Unless we can systematically understand the needs of people with diabetes and their families and have the mechanisms to develop and evaluate interventions that address those needs we will come-up short as a professional group. So, what is being done to help enhance the research competence and activity of nurses in diabetes?

FEND since its inception has recognised the importance of developing the clinical academic skills within the diabetes nurse speciality. A pivotal programme initiated and supported by FEND is the European Nurses Diabetes Collaborative University Programme (ENDCUP) programme. This programme has provided many diabetes nurses with the opportunity to gain a scientific grounding in diabetes care. This programme has now evolved and is available as an integrated MSc programme hosted by King's College London (KCL) as an MSc in Clinical Diabetes Care.

Research is an integral part of the programme, which is comprised of three modules delivered over 3 years. In the first year, the students critically consider the science of diabetes as a disease and its clinical management. The second year, focus on research methods, with students developing a systematic literature review and a research proposal. Finally, they undertake an empirical study on an aspect of diabetes care with the potential to show patient benefit. Students can exit the programme at the end of each year if they wish, receiving a postgraduate certificate or diploma if they complete the first or second years respectively. While it is demanding, students are

encouraged to complete the full MSc and this year two students did just that, graduating with merit. Ana Cristina Paiva was one of those students, completing a study of women with Type 1 diabetes's experience of preconception care. The other student Sarah Gane completed her dissertation on blood glucose excursions in patients using dexamethasone as part of their cancer care. Both students have presented their work in different contexts, including this year's FEND conference in Munich. The ENDCUP programme continues, and is offered with full support for the course fees provided by FEND to diabetes nurses who are FEND members (see details at <http://www.fend.org/projects/fend-endcup/endcup-application>).

Building on the success of the ENDCUP programme, FEND have also invested in developing doctoral studentships. These prestigious and competitive awards are given to diabetes nurses to complete a PhD at King's College London. The funding for these awards, includes: the PhD fees, full salary costs and monies toward research costs and travel. Again the focus is on developing clinically innovative research that can benefit people with diabetes. The two current fellows will soon complete their studies. Rita Forde has been studying preconception care in women with Type 2 diabetes and Mette Due-Christensen is studying the neglected population of adult onset Type 1 diabetes. Both studies will lead to significant new areas of nurse-led research and innovation. They too have been publishing their work and sharing it with other diabetes nurses at the FEND conference. The programme has been so successful that FEND will fund two more studentships to start in September 2017. An advert for these studentships is enclosed in this edition of the journal and can be found on the KCL and FEND websites, so if you have an innovative idea for a study do consider these opportunities.

So '*three cheers*' to FEND for all their investment in developing research training opportunities for diabetes nurses. While we should grasp these opportunities, it is also incumbent on all of us to think how we can improve the care we provide by engaging with research as is demanded of a specialist profession within diabetes. So, let's work together to build other opportunities to ensure that diabetes nurses can contribute to and lead the research we need to meet the ongoing challenges of diabetes.

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