

THE LANCET

“What is the commonest cause of death in a child with diabetes? The answer – from a global perspective – is lack of access to insulin. Families in the poorest parts of the world must make a choice between insulin for one child or starvation for the rest. The consequence, **in parts of India – which has more people with diabetes than any other country in the world – is that girls are missing from the children’s clinics.**¹ There is no choice at all in some parts of sub-Saharan Africa, where children with diabetes live, and die, as if insulin had never been discovered.”

***Edwin A M Gale - Diabetes and Metabolism, Department of Clinical Science,
University of Bristol, Southmead Hospital, Bristol BS10 5NB, UK
Edwin.Gale@bristol.ac.uk***

THE LANCET EDITORIAL

www.thelancet.com Vol.368 November 11, 2006, page 1626 - 1628



THE LANCET

Correspondence

Dear Sir,

.....“But I was surprised when Gale chose to refer to the paper from India by Sharad Pendsey² in the same piece. It gives a wrong signal about India. In January, 1994, Gale spent about a week at the Voluntary Health Services Diabetes Department, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, as our guest and saw at first hand our department’s unique lifetime comprehensive free Medicare services offered to more than 400 children (now more than 600) and adolescents with type 1 diabetes. The girls with diabetes in this region of India thrive very well thanks to the combined efforts of governmental and non-governmental agencies.”

Many of our girls have now grown up, got married, and have delivered healthy babies safely. In all these stages of their lives they have received unflinching support, both economic and emotional, from our juvenile diabetes programmes, which are liberally sponsored and sustained by munificent and philanthropic donors and friends of the Voluntary Health Services in Chennai and elsewhere.

C.V.Krishnaswami

diabetes2004-vhs@dishnetdsl.net

Diabetes Department, Voluntary Health Services, TTTI Post, Chennai 600 113, Tamil Nadu, India.

THE LANCET

Author's Reply

I read C.V. Krishnaswami's letter with respect and some sadness. Sadness, because I was not intending to imply that the diabetes community in India was tolerating or in any way responsible for the wholesale loss of children's lives..

Finally, I would like to put on record my very sincere respect and admiration for the work done for children with diabetes at the Voluntary Health Services Hospital in Chennai. I had the privilege of visiting this department in 1994, and was enormously impressed by the dedication and professional excellence with which comprehensive free medicare services are offered to children with diabetes, with the philanthropic support acknowledged by Krishnaswami. Children in other parts of India may or may not be as well provided for.....

Edwin Gale

Edwin.Gale@bristol.ac.uk

Department of Clinical Science (North Bristol), Lifeline Building, Southmead Hospital,
Bristol BS5 10NB, UK

www.thelancet.com Vol.369 February 10, 2007, page 461 - 462