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INFLUENCE TO INSPIRE (I2I) A DIABETES PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

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Influence to Inspire is a patient-centric initiative organized by UiTM Endocrine Team in collaboration with the Malaysia Diabetes Association and was first hosted on the Faculty of Medicine Sungai Buloh campus from February to May 2022. It is a novel peer-support program for diabetes patients aimed to provide empowerment in long-term diabetes management. Recognizing the fact that patients with chronic diseases may be more receptive to knowledge sharing among their peers, this program is designed as an education module for selected diabetes patients, termed 'influencers', who will be able to influence their targeted social members in providing support and guidance towards achieving optimum diabetes care and providing comprehensive knowledge to the influencer regarding diabetes and its complications. UiTM will be pioneering this program, by training the first batch of seven influencers, with the long-term aim of nationwide involvement.

This program was divided into five main modules, each covering the aspects of diabetes, delivered in half-day sessions spaced two to three weeks apart. This training program was conducted engagingly with lecture sessions interspersed with group discussions, hands-on experience, and entertaining games. Patient and caregiver information booklets were also produced for better knowledge dissemination. The trainers included UiTM Endocrine team members consisting of endocrine specialists and diabetic educators (DE), as well as a psychologist, rehabilitation doctor, dietitian, and nutritionist.

The first module opened with an introduction to the peer-support program by the program director, followed by experience-sharing by the influencers and an outline of motivational skills by the psychologist. The second module consisted of a more in-depth lecture on a talk from DE on insulin handling, and accompanied by hands-on experience with insulin use and familiarity with different types of insulin."



Next module concentrated on diabetic complications about the microvascular and macrovascular complications of diabetes-mellitus. It comes with a discussion and experience-sharing. The fourth module was on diabetes and food, mainly anchored by the dietitian and nutritionist, helped by DE. The fifth and final module started with a virtual tour of the UiTM hemodialysis unit and the rehabilitation-suite, to illustrate the impact of certain diabetic complications on lifestyle.