



# Candid Discussions About Diabetes and Eating Disorders

## Part 2

# Eating Disorders & Type 1 Diabetes

- 2.4 times the risk than women without diabetes.

Jones et al. (2000). British Medical Journal 320:1563-1566.

- 31% of 341 female Joslin patients (ages 13-60 years) omitted insulin for weight loss.

Polonsky et al. (1994). Diabetes Care 17:1178-1185.

- Strong relationship to microvascular complications of diabetes.

Rydall et al. (1997). New England Jnl of Medicine. 336:1849-1854.

- Self-reported insulin restriction conveyed a three-fold increased risk of mortality during 11 yr follow-up.

Goebel-Fabbri et al. (2008). Diabetes Care 31:415-419.

# “Diabulimia”

## The pros and cons of a name

- Pro:

- A name indicates that others struggle with it.
- Decreases shame and isolation.
- Raises awareness.
- Creates a way to talk about it.
- Provides a community.

- Con:

- This name risks conveying that it's exclusively bulimia.
- Associated solely with insulin restriction.
- Runs risk of oversimplifying a connection between two complex diseases.

# Insulin Restriction

- Why is it a purge symptom?
  - Without insulin or with too little insulin, body can't absorb glucose from blood, can't use or store calories.
  - As blood glucose increases, body attempts to regulate glucose by urinating out as much as it can.
  - Cells are starving, break down fat and muscle for energy.
  - Acidic ketone bodies form in blood, pH balance changes.
  - Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) is a medical crisis, requiring ICU treatment and can be fatal.

# Anorexia Nervosa in Type 1 Diabetes

- Calorie restriction leading to body weight less than minimally normal.
- Intense fear of gaining weight, despite the fact they are underweight.
- Disturbance in perception of body weight/shape, or undue influence of weight and shape on one's self-esteem.
- Co-morbid w. T1DM, "perfect" BG values and A1c "mask" ED until BMI dangerously low. What about Binge/Purge type?? Insulin underdosing in AN not mentioned in DSM-5.

*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* – 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. (2013).  
American Psychiatric Publishing.

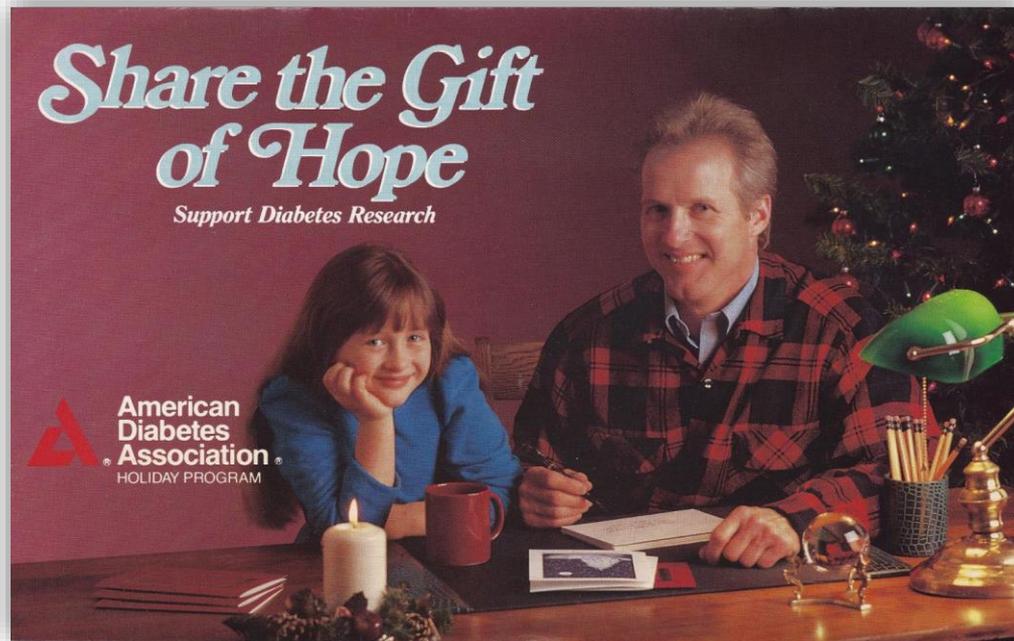
# Bulimia Nervosa in Type 1 Diabetes

- Recurrent episodes of binge eating:
  - Larger amount of food than peers would eat under similar circumstances.
  - Sense of loss of control over eating.
- Recurrent purging to prevent weight gain:
  - Self-induced vomiting.
  - Misuse of laxatives, diuretics, enemas, or other medications. **LIKE INSULIN**
  - Fasting, Excessive exercise.
- Both behaviors occur once weekly for 3 months.
- Self-evaluation unduly influenced by shape and weight.

# Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder (OSFED)

- All criteria for Anorexia are met except significant weight loss.
- All criteria for Bulimia are met except that bingeing and purging occurs less than once weekly.
- Recurrent insulin restriction for hyperglycemic calorie purging (not always with bingeing) also not mentioned in DSM-5.

# Asha Brown



# Contributing Factors

Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME)

“Lazy” information from media and reputable health publications

Lack of support in transition from pediatric to adult endocrinology

# Not Just Insulin Omission



My eating disorder behaviors shifted and changed over time.

# My Reality Became....



- Lies
- Denial
- Fear

# Recovery Essentials



- Accept
- Surrender
- Embrace

# Learning from the experts

- Interviewed 25 recovered women (over age 18)
- Recruited from FB page “Diabulimia Awareness”
- T1DM min 1 yr, ED min 1 yr, Recovered min 1 yr
- All received healthcare in the US

## Defining Recovery:

- 1) Consistently taking appropriate insulin
- 2) Not engaging in rigid dieting or over-exercise
- 3) Not intentionally running BG's high
- 4) Eating flexibly most of the time
- 5) Not acting on ED thoughts or feelings

# Getting motivation

## Robbed of energy and health

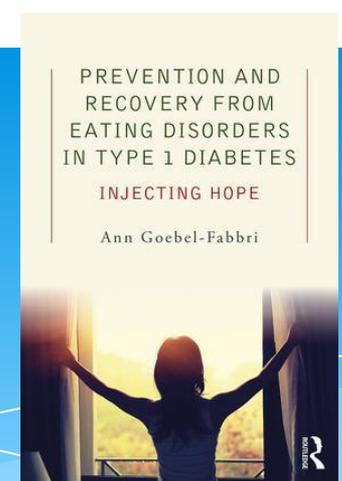
*I remember being in the subway in [name of city removed] and going up 2 flights of stairs and thinking, "Oh my god, I can't do this." Caroline*

## Damaged relationships

*My husband was just like, "I'm not raising my child with a person who's like this ... you'll lose everything to this." And the end of our marriage was when I sought recovery. Carrie*

## Fear

*I could already foresee the future. I was like, "I'm going to be 32 one day ... And I'm not going to have legs. I'll be blind because of what I'm doing right now. Anna*



# Challenges to Recovery

PREVENTION AND  
RECOVERY FROM  
EATING DISORDERS  
IN TYPE 1 DIABETES

INJECTING HOPE

Ann Goebel-Fabbri



## Fear of Fat

*The weight gain ... feeling like your skin is literally stretching to accommodate the water. I mean it's awful ... and nothing fit ... Every woman who has a weight issue ... it's their worst nightmare. Julia*

## Finding the Right Treatment

*Nobody understands type 1 diabetes ... I tried person after person after person. I went to this big, huge eating disorder center nearby ... they didn't know anything about type 1 diabetes, and it just made me feel worse. Janine*

# Treatment

PREVENTION AND  
RECOVERY FROM  
EATING DISORDERS  
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INJECTING HOPE

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## The Importance of “Diabetes-informed” Treatment

*I couldn't get away with anything because they knew absolutely everything ... I feel like this eating disorder is particularly isolating ... Talking with someone who understands exactly what you've gone through is ... it was priceless. Julia*

## Need Gradual Improvements

*What I didn't realize then is that they were gradually bringing my blood sugar down over time, so that I would be safe ... But as soon as I was left to my own devices, I would keep my blood sugar in the low 100's or under 100 ... Everything hurt. It wasn't just my legs ... Here I was destroying myself ... I finally go and get healthy, and then my body is rebelling against me for doing the one thing that I hadn't been doing in the past. Abby*

# Gifts of Recovery



- Healthy Relationship with Food
- Diabetes Acceptance

# Gifts of Recovery



Functioning brain

Rediscovering ME

# We Are Diabetes



**[www.wearediabetes.org](http://www.wearediabetes.org)**

- \* Referrals to credible providers and treatment centers across the United States.
- \* Guidance through the recovery process.
- \* Support for family and loved ones.
- \* Unique resources designed specifically for the ED-DMT1 population.
- \* Education for healthcare professionals.
- \* Recovery Coaching