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Diabetes defeated an engineers' approach to regain health

Manogran Govender

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Durban North consulting civil engineer, Manogran Govender (51), was diagnosed with diabetes in March 2002, with the typical symptoms of frequent urination, blurred vision, dry mouth, thirst and high blood pressure. He enrolled in a programme offered by endocrinologists that have a centre for diabetes, and consulted dieticians, diabetic nurses and rigorously followed their advice. But his condition worsened rapidly and he soon found himself taking medications for high blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol and the early onset of arthritis – a known side effect of cholesterol medication. Being logical and methodical, it dawned on him that having followed the best advice of medical professionals, taken his medication, watched his diet and exercised; he should have become healthier - not worsened. He witnessed the worsening condition of his father and mother-in-law and saw first-hand the effects of a MDR infection and a botched amputation. These events made him determined to change the course of history that conventional medical wisdom deemed to be his fate and that of his children. He consulted widely, read books written by ordinary people that reversed their diabetes; studied many peer-reviewed published papers in medical journals and read books by medical professionals that were able to reverse diabetes with their patients. He discovered that many people bucked the trend and actually regained their health, by having the right mindset and the skillset necessary to reverse diabetes – to enjoy normal health and maintain an active lifestyle. Manogran Govender maintains “there are no secrets, no miracle cures or magical machines that can do this. A person's body gives them a wake-up call when they develop diabetes. Everyone has a choice to radically change their lifestyle and regain their health; or continue on the same trajectory - take their pills and get progressively worse.” After 10 years of being on increasing doses of medication, Manogran is no longer on any medication, has normal blood glucose levels and HbA1c, and leads a balanced and active life. His book documents his personal journey in reversing diabetes.

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Are social inequities the reason for the increase in obesity and type 2 diabetes?

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Chronic non communicable diseases are major public health concerns worldwide and evidence based literature shows significant relationships between low socioeconomic status and being overweight and/or obese; such a relationship has also been observed for type-2 diabetes. Many factors influence weight and body composition, including genetic, lifestyle, living conditions and intergenerational vicious cycles of malnutrition. Being overweight during early life is associated with poor health outcomes over the short and long term. In countries with high rates of adolescent pregnancies, growth and development of mothers and newborns is compromised, moreover when these mothers are experiencing under or over nutrition. In addition, a mother exposed to disadvantaged conditions such as food insecurity, low income and poverty is at risk for developing obesity and type-2 diabetes, herself and her children by promoting a vicious cycle of malnutrition and fetal programming of obesity and diabetes in new generations. Traditionally poverty and low socioeconomic status were associated with under-nutrition, but nowadays exploring the relationship of living in disadvantaged conditions requires a methodological effort in order to establish the extension of the many factors interacting in this complex situation and suggest public policies according to this situation. Modifiable factors such as lifestyle, quality diets, modifications of pre-conceptional environments and education should be part of interventions guided by government and agencies for interventions in vulnerable populations.

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