

## Coronavirus infection (COVID-19)

### Summary of recommendations regarding COVID-19 in children with diabetes

#### Keep Calm and Mind your Diabetes Care and Public Health Advice

#### International Society of Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes (ISPAD)

March 25, 2020

This document complements the ISPAD posting of March 19, 2020 and provides ISPAD guidance for all Health Care Professionals that care for children, adolescents and young adults with diabetes, in face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite many uncertainties, the COVID-19 pandemic recommendations in most countries include people with diabetes within the "at risk" population. In this update, we report from Pediatric Endocrinology colleagues in Wuhan, China and Italy who state they have not had cases of COVID-19 in children, adolescents, or young adults <25 years of age with diabetes who required hospitalization. We find these reports from Pediatric Endocrinology experts in COVID-19 hotspots globally, though anecdotal, to be reassuring. These anecdotal reports state that children with diabetes have not shown a different disease pattern compared to children who do not have diabetes. It has been widely reported that children in general are less affected than adults. In no way does this diminish the need to follow public health guidance---the same precautions apply to youth with diabetes. Any illness makes diabetes more difficult to manage and can increase the risk of diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). This summary does, however, serve as reassurance that youth with diabetes are not more affected by COVID than peers.

- 1) Wuhan, China: Reports no hospitalized or severe cases of COVID-19 reported in youth <25 years of age with diabetes. *Dr. Xiaoping Luo, (Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics, Tongji Hospital, Director, Center for the Diagnosis of Genetic Metabolic Diseases, Dean, Faculty of Pediatrics, Tongji Medical College, Huazhong University of Science and Technology)*. He emphasized the severity of the situation and that they have been fighting the COVID-19 with all their efforts for the past 2 and half months. Dr. Xiaoping Luo does report several cases of newly diagnosed type 1 diabetes (T1D) or DKA in children with known T1D with delayed admission to hospital due to the closed service for non-COVID-19 care. He reported that the situation in China is much more stable and believes the condition is under control now. He emphasizes: please keep in mind it is very important to protect ourselves, wash hands and always wear a mask when contacting a possible COVID patient.
- 2) *Professor Andrea Scaramuzza from Cremona, Italy* also reports on the severity of the COVID infection in the region. However, he also reports that he is not aware of a severe case of COVID-19 in youth with diabetes <25 years. Dr. Scaramuzza fears that because of the COVID-19 pandemic families are not taking their child to his/her pediatrician or Emergency Services when they have symptoms of new onset diabetes or DKA. He reports multiple cases of patients presenting to Emergency services with severe DKA. Dr. Scaramuzza also emphasizes the importance of following public health measures in addition to standard diabetes care and, when needed, sick day management guidelines (see ISPAD Sick Day Management Guidelines).

He also shares this video (<https://youtu.be/OAiKgJLFn8Q>) by colleague and Pediatric Endocrinologist, Dr. Dario Iafusco, and his team from Naples made to keep awareness about T1D onset high even in these COVID-19-dark times.

- 3) *Professor Franco Chiarelli from Chieti, Italy and Professor Valentino Cherubini from Ancona, Italy* also report children and young people with diabetes have not been affected.

**In summary, ISPAD highlights** these points regarding COVID-19 based on these reports from trusted Pediatric Endocrinology colleagues in China and Italy who have experienced the pandemic:

- 1) To date (March 24, 2020), Pediatric Endocrinologists from China and Italy report no cases of COVID-19 in youth with diabetes requiring hospitalization.
- 2) These colleagues report a huge stress on the healthcare system.
- 3) ISPAD emphasizes the importance of continued attentiveness to standard diabetes care to avoid the need for hospitalization and emergency or urgent care visits, but to utilize these resources if needed.
- 4) There has been a rapid increase in telehealth as a way to continue to care for youth with diabetes and decrease risk for infection. Communication between patients, families and healthcare teams is vitally important. Methods to do so that avoid visits to clinics or hospitals can provide needed diabetes advice and reduce risk for COVID-19 transmission.
- 5) It is extremely important that as healthcare providers we support our patients and families as well as our colleagues in this stressful time.
- 6) The ISPAD Forum has been expanded to share insights on COVID-19 and children, adolescents, and young adult with diabetes globally.

ISPAD will continue to provide updates based on our international colleagues reports.