



REPORT

# Overcoming diabetes inequalities

## Diabetes Africa UK Forum 2023



### PARTNERS AND SPONSORS



This event was sponsored by Eli Lilly and Company, Insulet, Medtronic, and A. Menarini Farmaceutica Internazionale SRL who have had no input into the topics discussed or selection of speakers

# About this event



## 2023 >>> UK FORUM



The Diabetes Africa UK Forum 'Overcoming Diabetes Inequalities' took place on 23 November 2023 in London. The forum provided health and social care professionals, policy-makers, researchers, and health commissioners with an opportunity to meet with one another, take stock of the activities happening around the UK, exchange knowledge and seek opportunities to work together to improve diabetes and related disease outcomes for people of Black heritage.

Diabetes Africa is a UK-based international, non-governmental organisation that helps healthcare professionals, people living with diabetes, and decision-makers reach more people and make a greater impact fighting diabetes. With more than 2,500 members and subscribers, Diabetes Africa is committed to supporting and connecting innovators, and improving outcomes for people living with diabetes and related diseases.



# Partners and sponsors



King's Health Partners is an Academic Health Sciences Centre (AHSC) where world-class research, education, and clinical practice are brought together for the benefit of patients.

One of eight AHSCs nationally, our partnership brings together three NHS Foundation Trusts (Guy's and St Thomas', King's College Hospital, and South London and Maudsley), and an internationally rated top 25 university in health research and education, King's College London.

We bring together more than 46,000 NHS staff with 31,000 students and academics, to translate cutting-edge research into excellent patient care through world-class education and training. We deliver high impact innovation - discovering new insights into disease, transforming diagnostics and unlocking new therapies and digital tools. Together we represent a £4.2 billion partnership, with more than 4.2 million patient contacts each year.



Diabetes UK is a leading charity dedicated to improving the lives of people living with diabetes in the United Kingdom. With our impact spanning over eight decades, we are at the forefront of the fight against diabetes, working tirelessly to support, educate, and advocate for individuals affected by the condition.

Our mission is to create a world where diabetes can do no harm, and we do so by funding ground-breaking research, providing invaluable resources, and championing the rights of

those living with diabetes. We strive to ensure equitable access to quality healthcare, promote diabetes prevention, and foster a community of understanding and support.

We are honoured to partner with Diabetes Africa in the pursuit of overcoming diabetes inequalities, sharing knowledge, and uniting our efforts to make a difference to the lives of those affected by diabetes. Together, we aim to raise awareness, facilitate dialogue, and drive positive change on a global scale.



CAHN is a Black-led organisation set up to address health inequalities affecting people of Caribbean and African descent in the UK. Working with community groups, faith networks and cross-sector organisations, CAHN leads on strategic engagement to ensure that the voices and experiences of black people are placed at the heart of public policy and practice. CAHN's vision is to eradicate health inequalities within a generation by building community resilience and a social movement.

Our mission is to ensure that strategic and operational actions of service providers across health and cross sector agencies and commissioners, lead to racial and social justice for black people.



Lilly unites caring with discovery to create medicines that make life better for people around the world. We've been pioneering life-changing discoveries for nearly 150 years, and today our medicines help more than 51 million people across the globe. Harnessing the power of biotechnology, chemistry and genetic medicine, our scientists are urgently advancing new discoveries to solve some of the world's most significant health challenges.

With each step toward a healthier world, we're motivated by one thing: making life better for millions more people. That includes delivering innovative clinical trials that reflect the diversity of our world and working to ensure our medicines are accessible and affordable. To learn more, visit [Lilly.co.uk](http://Lilly.co.uk).



Insulet Corporation, headquartered in Massachusetts, is an innovative medical device company dedicated to simplifying life for people with diabetes through its Omnipod product platform. The Omnipod Insulin Management System provides a unique alternative to traditional insulin delivery methods. For more information, please visit: [www.omnipod.com/en-gb/hcp](http://www.omnipod.com/en-gb/hcp)



Medtronic works towards alleviating pain, restoring health, and extending life for people with diabetes, Medtronic has worked with the global community to change the way people manage their condition by empowering them to enjoy greater freedom and better health.



A.Menarini Farmaceutica Internazionale SRL is the UK subsidiary of the Italian pharmaceutical company, Menarini Group. We pride ourselves on working in partnership with others to make available innovative medicines in both primary and secondary care. Menarini are established in multiple therapy areas including anti-infectives, cardiology, and metabolic disease. More information can be found at [www.menarini.co.uk](http://www.menarini.co.uk)

# The first forum of its kind

On 23 November 2023, Diabetes Africa held its first UK Forum under the theme “Overcoming Diabetes Inequalities”. Health and social care professionals, researchers, community leaders and NHS decision-makers took part in this event, which took place in London.

Participants and speakers heralded this event as a long-awaited platform for all people who care for people of Black, African and Caribbean origin living with diabetes.



Partha S Kar 🇮🇳 🇬🇧 🇦🇪 @parthaskar · Nov 23  
Thank you @diabetes\_africa for the kind invite

Delighted to represent @NHSDiabetesProg and success so far in tackling inequalities in #Tech access #T1Diabetes

And plans ahead

Encouraging all not to shy away from calling out #Racism as it exists

One NHS? One rule for all.



**PARTICIPANTS AND SPEAKERS BROUGHT THE CONVERSATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

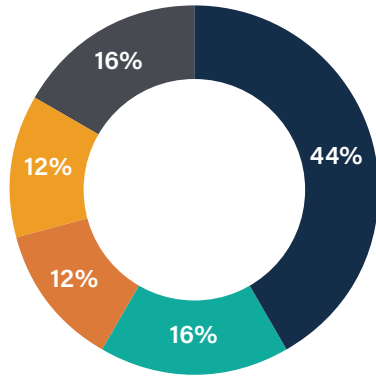
**117**

Participants in the first Diabetes Africa UK Forum

**53,000+**

Impressions on social media

**PARTICIPANTS BY CATEGORY**



- **Healthcare professionals 44%**  
Incl. general practitioners, diabetologists, nurses, dietitians, foot and eye care specialists
- **Social care professionals 16%**  
Incl. care workers, occupational therapists, community support officers, charity leaders
- **Researchers 12%**  
Incl. Uni. of Leicester, OCDEM, UCL, KCL and other prestigious research hubs
- **Decision-makers 12%**  
National, regional, and local leads in diabetes and related diseases
- **Other 16%**

**THEY SAY**

“As soon as you walked in, you could feel the buzz in the room. Diabetes is a multi-system disorder and it’s been really encouraging to network with such a variety of people, from across the full spectrum of diabetes care. I hope this forum will take place again.”



**Ms Evelyn Mensah**, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust

**91%**

Of participants would strongly recommend our UK Forum to a friend or colleague.



**PARTNERS AND SPONSORS**



# Tackling diabetes in the UK with the voices that matter

**27 speakers engaged with participants over 14 sessions, with interactive panel discussions covering some of the hottest topics in diabetes care.**

Coming from a range of backgrounds, speakers and participants shared insights to improve outreach, diagnosis and treatment among Black communities. In addition to clinical education, the programme included policy-oriented and strategic topics, such as the

creation and scaling-up of culturally-appropriate diabetes and obesity programmes.

We designed sessions to be both informative and interactive, with audience participation.

In the post-event survey, participants gave the relevance of the programme an average rating of 4.8 out of 5.



## SESSION TOPICS

- Access to CGM for people with Type 2 diabetes
- Co-creation in diabetes care
- Culturally-tailored programmes for diabetes and obesity management
- Diabetes foot in darker skin tones
- Diabetic eye disease in Black populations
- Getting the diagnosis right
- Obesity in Black populations
- Representation in clinical trials
- Scaling projects within the NHS
- Technology and T1D outcomes
- Technology uptake
- Type 2 diabetes remission

**SPEAKERS**

(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER OF FIRST NAME)

**Dr Alistair Lumb**, Consultant Diabetes, Oxford University Hospitals. Co-chair, the Diabetes Technology Network**Ms Evelyn Mensah**, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, Clinical Lead & WRES Expert at London North West Healthcare NHS Trust**Dr Bernadette Adeyileka-Tracz**, Executive Director, Diabetes Africa**Dr Faye Ruddock**, Chair, Caribbean & African Health Network**Charles Kwaku-Odoi**, Chief Executive Caribbean African Health Network**Prof. Gideon Mlawa**, Consultant Physician in Diabetes and Endocrinology, Queens Hospital Romford**Dr Chris Manu**, Consultant Diabetologist and General Medicine at King's College Hospital NHS Trust Foundation**Grace Vanterpool, MBE**, Consultant Nurse in Diabetes, Diabetes Integrated Care Ealing**Daniel Newman**, Living with Type 1 diabetes**Dr Hibbah Osei-Kwasi**, Lecturer in Nutrition, Loughborough University**Don Shenker**, Commissioning Manager (Long Term Conditions), South East London ICB**Dr Jenny Teke**, Head of Research & Innovation, Medway NHS Foundation Trust**Douglas Twenefour**, Registered Dietitian, Head of Care, Diabetes UK**Dr Joan St John**, GPwER Diabetes, Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust

## “Very relevant”

92.8% of participants found the topics discussed in the forum to be relevant (19%) or very relevant (73.8%).

### THEY SAY

“It’s wonderful that we’ve been able to bring together so many stellar speakers, sharing expertise, insights and knowledge. We could feel that we were moving forward and doing something to address health inequalities.”

**Dr Joan St John**, General Practitioner with Extended Role in Diabetes, & Chair, Diabetes Africa UK Forum Programme Committee

## “Thought-provoking”

Respondents in the post-event survey called the presentations and sessions “thought-provoking”, “inspiring”, “insightful” and “of excellent quality.”





**SPEAKERS**  
(CONTINUED)



**Prof. Louise Goff**, Professor of Nutrition Science, University of Leicester



**Ruth Jordan** Assistant Director Improvement, Implementation & Spread, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board



**Dr Meera Ladwa**, Clinical Lead for Type 1, Transition & Young Adult Diabetes, Newham University Hospital



**Prof. Sam Seidu**, Professor of Primary Care Diabetes and Cardiometabolic Medicine, University of Leicester



**Modupe Peters**, Registered Dietitian / Diabetes Lead, Food for Purpose



**Dr Shivani Misra**, Senior Clinical Lecturer and Honorary Consultant Diabetologist, Imperial College London



**Dr Nadine Fontaine-Palmer** Director, Mabadiliko



**Shola Oladipo**, Registered Dietitian, CEO Food for Purpose



**Prof. Partha Kar**, National Speciality Advisor, Diabetes, NHS England



**Dr Shukrat O. Salisu-Olatunji** Living with Type 1 diabetes



**Dr Renuka Dias**, Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist, Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital



**Dr Thomas Barber**, Associate Clinical Professor in Endocrinology and Diabetes, University of Warwick



**Dr Roxanne Crosby-Nwaobi**, Lead Nurse for Research, Moorfields Eye Hospital



# 10 ideas from the forum

**Over the course of the day, passionate conversations often revealed complex topics intertwined among diabetes inequalities: challenging care pathways, cultural understanding, role and knowledge of healthcare professionals.**

Importantly, the event provided a platform for many participants to hear the other side of the story and find common ground.

To inspire further action, we list here some suggestions and advice from our experienced speakers and participants.



## “Do the fundamentals well for everyone”

**Barbara Hudson**, Diabetes Specialist Nurse, Birmingham

How would you treat this patient if they shared the same cultural or ethnic background as you? Would you do anything differently? For healthcare professionals, pausing to reflect and question their assumptions can be a means to overcome inequalities in the consultation room.

## “Lean into the discomfort”

**Ms Evelyn Mensah**, Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, London

For healthcare professionals seeking to make a change, the road may be difficult, but it is worth it.

## “It’s about being bold”



**Dr Faye Ruddock**, Chair,  
Caribbean & African  
Health Network

This is how Dr Ruddock, Co-Chair of the Diabetes UK Tackling Inequality Commission summarised the report released on 22 November 2023, indicating that professionals should be encouraged to speak up on behalf of people who are racially discriminated. Among the seven recommendations of the report, Dr Ruddock draw attention to representation of minority ethnic healthcare professionals in senior positions.

## “Every small change can be positive”



**Douglas Twenefour**,  
Registered Dietitian,  
Head of Care, Diabetes UK

Discussions on “Type 2 diabetes remission and African & Caribbean food” were passionate and informative. How could we encourage people of African and Caribbean backgrounds to adopt different eating habits, for example a diet lower in fat or carbohydrate? “Don’t give up on someone who seems reluctant” said Douglas Twenefour with empathy, because “every small change in diet can be positive.”

## “This will not be called Type 2 diabetes in the future”

**Dr Shivani Misra**, Senior Clinical Lecturer and Honorary Consultant Diabetologist, Imperial College London

Dr Misra described lean autoimmune diabetes, a condition often presenting among the patients of East African origin she works with. Misdiagnosing a form of diabetes can lead to negative outcomes.

## “Identify levers and use them to solve problems”

**Ruth Jordan** Assistant Director Improvement, Implementation & Spread, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

When reviewing strategy and tactics to overcome inequalities with an NHS programme, knowing the landscape is important. Project proponents should take the time to get to know the people, structures and challenges of the environment they will operate in. Asking the right questions matters, too. Instead of: “How can I get all these people to do what I want them to do?”, a better question might be: “How can I help all these people to do what they want to do?”

## “Make noise about your research”

**Prof. Sam Seidu**, Professor of Primary Care Diabetes and Cardiometabolic Medicine, University of Leicester

There is a wide range of research underway focusing on diabetes care inequalities in the UK, and how to improve diabetes and co-morbidity outcomes in Black, African and Caribbean populations. For Prof. Sam Seidu, dissemination of research findings is an essential step in bridging the gap in diabetes care. Unfortunately, this step is often overlooked, insufficiently funded or encouraged. Events like the forum can play a part in increasing awareness about research breakthroughs.

## “Don’t be a gatekeeper. Support others”



**Alistair Lumb**, Consultant Diabetes, Oxford University Hospitals. Co-chair, the Diabetes Technology Network

One of the ways that healthcare professionals can address inequalities is to support people to access available treatment and services. This simple point applies particularly to technology, which can have a tremendous impact on the quality of care for a person living with diabetes. Access to available technology was discussed in several sessions, including with people with lived experience.

## “Talk about cultural heritage to find out more information”

**Anonymous**, submitted via the post-event survey

When it comes to health choices and beliefs, understanding genuinely where a patient is coming from is a difficult task. Approaching consultations with an open mind, and recognising, with cultural humility, that everyone’s habits are the product of diverse cultural experiences can go a long way in making diabetes care more effective.

## “Be proactive in ensuring representation”

**Dr Roxanne Crosby-Nwaobi**, Lead Nurse for Research, Moorfields Eye Hospital

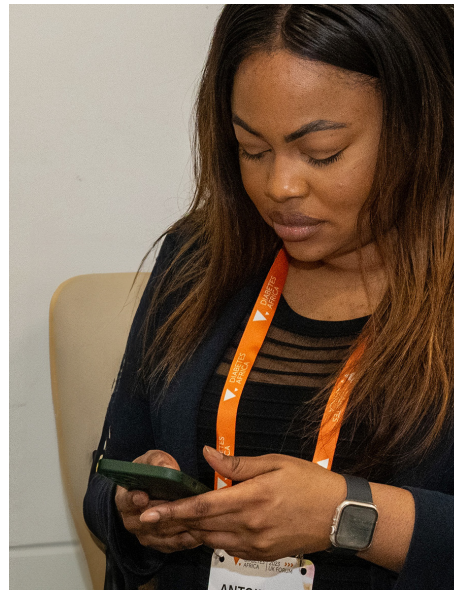
Improving Black and ethnic minorities representation is a collective task. By ensuring a diverse set of experience in decision-making at all levels of responsibility, we can help tackle blind spots in diabetes care. Speaking up when someone is missing around the table should be normalised.



# Visibility beyond the meeting room

Posts, articles and newsletters about the event cumulated over 50,000 impressions over the lifecycle of the project. Direct marketing efforts via email reached over 9,000 professionals and people living with diabetes.

Diabetes Africa worked with partners to increase the visibility of the event and related themes, and encouraged participants to reach out to their online communities during the event.



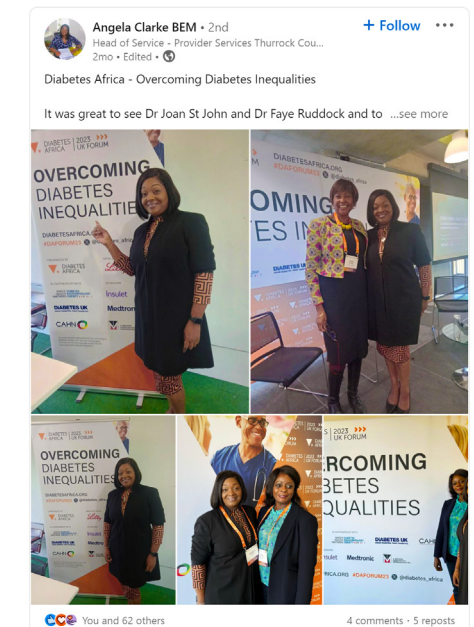
tld\_dan This past week was about recognising health inequalities within the diabetes space. On Wednesday @diabetesuk published their report into tackling Health Inequalities in Diabetes with a number of recommendations. I was involved with the Tackling Inequalities Commission from the start and was pleased to be acknowledged in the report. The commission worked with people and organisations directly working with and supporting people who have the lived experience of facing health inequalities. The report has seven calls to action, while all are important, the three key ones for me are:

- 1] Anti-racism - be bold
- 2] Representation - be diverse
- 3] Co-creation - be inclusive

These are important to me because they should be the foundation for any policy discussion or project and not an afterthought. To read the report, search for Diabetes UK Health Inequalities report using your favourite search engine.

On Thursday I spoke at the inaugural @diabetesafrica1 overcoming diabetes' inequalities conference. I was invited to speak about my ex of how diabetes technology has impacted my diabetes management (it's been a game changer), the challenges of accessing technology and how access to diabetes technology can be improved for black people living with type 1 diabetes in the UK. The statistics show that the use of diabetes technology within the population is lower in comparison to other ethnicities.

Through employment I've been fortunate to have had the opportunity to gain a better understanding of how to access diabetes technology and realise that it is something that I am





**Shivani Misra**  
@ShivaniM\_KC

I am genuinely excited about today's event on improving health inequalities in diabetes in people of Black / African & Caribbean heritage - just look at this programme 🌟



**Martha Stewart** • 2nd  
Senior Lecturer & Deputy Programme Lead: MSc...  
3w • 🌐

+ Follow ...

💡 "If everyone attending the Diabetes Africa UK Forum could change one thing, however small, in their professional lives tomorrow, we would begin the process of system change and improve the lives of people of Black African and Caril ...see more



**2,800+**

Email interactions (open and clicks)

**53,000+**

Impressions on social media

**1,700+**

Likes of social media posts

**300+**

Shares of our campaign material



# 9 out of 10 attendees

**9 out of 10 attendees would strongly recommend the forum to colleagues and friends. Feedback on the forum was overwhelmingly positive.**

The event's Net Promoter Score, a standardised metric of satisfaction, was +90.5 (on a scale ranging from -100 to +100).

Over 40% of participants filled out the post-event survey. Participants commended the "variety of speakers", "interactive" and "thought-provoking" nature of sessions.

For some participants, the forum provided an opportunity to "see the unseen". Many participants expressed interest in attending similar events in the future.



## THEY SAY\*

**"It was an excellent inaugural conference."**

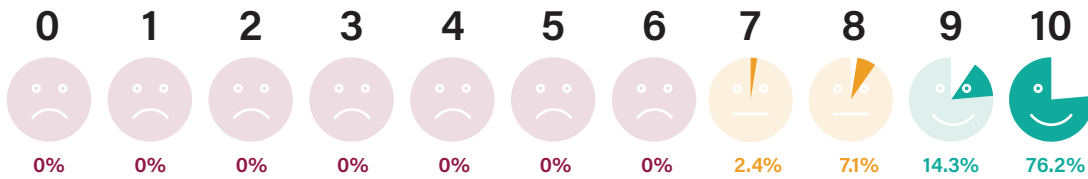
All the presentations which I attended were of excellent quality, highly informative. The venue was great, the food was delicious and the opportunity to network with people was fantastic."

**"The speakers were not only knowledgeable but inspiring."**

Hearing the comments and questions from those in the audience was insightful and added to the event being a blast!"

**\*Anonymous feedback provided in the post-event participant survey**

**On a scale 0 (unlikely) to 10 (very likely), how likely are you to recommend the 'Diabetes Africa UK Forum' to a colleague or friend?**



The Net Promoter Score is the world's leading metric for measuring customer satisfaction and loyalty. People giving a score of 9 and 10 are identified as promoters and people giving a score below 7 are identified as detractors. The NPS is the difference between the percentage of promoters and detractors. The NPS of the Forum was +90.5, a score generally perceived as very high.

**How relevant to your work were the topics discussed?**



When considering the relevance of the topics, participants gave an average score of 4.8 out for 5

**How would you rate the quality of speakers/presenters?**



Speakers and presenters were highly rated by participants. They received an average score of 4.7 out of 5.



# In their own words

In the post-event survey, participants shared what they found the most valuable about the event across four measures: networking, calibre of speakers, session topics and format, and logistics. We share here some of the comments we received.

**“It was an excellent inaugural conference. All the presentations which I attended were of excellent quality, highly informative.”**

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## Networking

### “What I found most valuable was...”

“Meeting other professionals and hearing from health professionals about the work they are doing”

“Access to multidisciplinary experts. Smaller groups to enable discussion and the ability to network”

“A chance to meet with like-minded people”

“Connecting with and being inspired by others seeking to address health inequalities”



“Opportunity to network in the breaks”

“Discussions and key activities”

“Meeting black experts in health & being informed about health inequalities in diabetes”

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## Calibre of speakers

“The presentations were thought-provoking”

“All the speakers were credible and knowledgeable and content was very relevant”

“Each session was very informative and interactive. The speakers were not only knowledgeable but inspiring. Hearing the comments and questions from those in the audience was insightful and added to the event being a blast!”

“Insightful and informative talks by very good speakers”



**“[An] opportunity to ‘see the unseen,’ learn about and commit to actions that reduce inequalities in marginalised and minoritised groups of people with diabetes.”**

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**Session topics and format**

“The content of the whole event was very rich and highly relevant!”

“Excellent conference.”

“Great insight and food for thought on how to apply practices discussed to improve outcome in the BAME population”

**“What I found most valuable was...”**

“The insightful and informative talks by very good speakers”

“The diverse conversations and patient stories”

“Hearing from people with lived experience of diabetes”

“The focus on Black African and Caribbean ethnicities”

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**Logistics**

“Good number of networking breaks. Well organised.”

“The venue was great, the food was delicious and the opportunity to network with people was fantastic.”

“I appreciated the space and quality of each room, and the food”

“Well done to the organising team and speakers. It was brilliant”

**“My only regret was that I couldn’t attend all the workshops and had to choose”**

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**“I have never seen so many black health professionals in the same room. It was beautiful to see. Lunch was delectable!”**

