

January 9, 2017

Media Statement

NEW WA RESEARCH HOPES TO UNRAVEL EXERCISE – DIABETES MYSTERIES

West Australian researchers have been given new funding to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of blood sugar levels on exercise performance in people with type 1 diabetes.

Diabetes Research WA executive director Sherl Westlund said the group was proud to provide \$80,000 to fund the project.

Project supervisor Dr Karen Rothacker, an endocrinology and diabetes fellow at Princess Margaret Hospital, said the research aimed to better support people with type 1 diabetes to exercise.

“While type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease and not caused by an unhealthy lifestyle, regular physical activity reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, assists in weight control and improves quality of life and reduces stress in people with the condition,” she said.

“However, because exercise can cause blood sugar levels to go too high or too low, it can create issues in managing type 1 diabetes which may deter those with it from engaging in physical activity.

“We suspect that exercising with high blood glucose levels negatively impacts exercise performance and also want to look at the differences when exercising with standard or low insulin rates.

“The hope is to generate a picture of how blood sugars and insulin affect exercise performance and use that to help people with type 1 diabetes to perform at their best, thereby encouraging greater involvement in physical activity.”

“Type 1 diabetes is a chronic disease that’s on the rise in Australia and, until we can cure it, we need to do everything in our power to support research that helps those affected by it live better,” said Ms Westlund.

The project will recruit 22 WA people living with type 1 diabetes aged 14 to 26 who’ve had diabetes for more than a year, have had type diabetes for more than a year with a HbA1c <9% and be free from injury or other illness which would affect their ability to undertake exercise testing.

To find out about participating in the study, email karen.rothacker@health.wa.gov.au or call (08) 9340 8744.

Diabetes Research WA, based at Royal Perth Hospital, was established in 1976 to stimulate research into diabetes in Western Australia and has distributed more than \$5 million dollars for this work.

For information, please visit www.diabetesresearchwa.com.au or call (08) 9224 1006.

-ends-

Media Contact: Natalie Caudle, natalie@capturemedia.com.au, 0407 984 435