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Title of project: Type 1 Diabetes and Disordered Eating

ABSTRACT

In the past 10 years there is increasing recognition that around a third of people with Type 1 diabetes (T1D) have pervasive fears of weight gain with insulin, severe enough to omit all or some of their daily insulin requirements. As there is no consensus definition for this phenomenon, we will use the term Type 1 Diabetes and Disordered Eating (T1DE). On social media it is often referred as 'diabulimia'. T1DE leads to persistent hyperglycaemia, early onset of diabetes complications and is one of the leading causes of premature mortality in young people with T1D. Yet it mostly goes un-detected. The lack of a definition of T1DE contributes to the difficulties in screening and developing and evaluating innovative interventions to improve outcomes in this very high-risk group. At King's College London, UK (KCL), we have proposed a set of diagnostic criteria for T1DE and are piloting a pathway of care that integrates graded re-insulinisation and psychotherapy. The preliminary findings are promising in improving biomedical and psychological outcomes.

The overall aim of this visiting professorship is to set up a collaboration with diabetes and mental health professionals and researchers in Denmark to develop and set up a pan UK-Denmark clinical research programme to improve the outcomes of people with T1DE. This will include the longer term aim of conducting observational studies to estimate the distribution and risk factors for T1DE and developing and piloting innovative complex interventions for further evaluation in full scale clinical trials. This professorship will increase the awareness of T1DE amongst the patient and clinical community in the short term and in the long term develop the evidence for effective interventions while also implementing service delivery.