

AADE in Practice

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Blogs, Blogging, Top Diabetes Blogs and More

BY HOPE WARSHAW, MMSC, RD, BC-ADM, CDE

The diabetes blogosphere is alive, well and blossoming! Are you aware of this burgeoning global space where people with diabetes (PWD) and their loved ones can connect 24/7/365? Do you know where and how to jump in? Need a few top diabetes blogs to recommend? Read on...

Bit of History

Blogging began about ten years ago. Two PWD who were among the pioneers are Amy Tenderich of diabetesmine.com and Kerri Sparling of sixuntilme.com. Diabetes blogs and bloggers have multiplied and evolved along with the reach of the Internet and social networking tools. Today bloggers push out each of their blogs to potential readers via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc. and use these social media vehicles to pull in readers.

Blog(s) and Blogging Defined

Think of "a blog" as two items. A person's or entity's "blog" is the space in which they post blogs. Their blog might be located on a page of their website or on a website they use to format and host their blog, such as wordpress or blogspot. A "blog" is also an individual article ranging from roughly 300 to 1200 words. An individual blog might cover a new product, recent research study results, diabetes event, or a personal struggle or success with managing diabetes.



A blog might contain related photographs or graphics, might link to a research study, product information, press release, or a related blog on the blogger's site (yes, the longer you're on their site, the more you'll read!). Most blogs offer an opportunity to leave comments. To date most top diabetes blogs are written by PWD or their loved ones. (Come on fellow diabetes educators, let's join the blogosphere and let PWDs know we're out there!)

Tenderich categorizes diabetes blogs in three buckets: 1) citizen journalism, 2) personal story or journey, 3) established media outlet. However, a person's or entity's blog can offer a potpourri of all three types of blogs.

Blogging is no longer limited just to words. Enter vlogging or video blogging. Ginger Vieira, a PWD, is a diabetes vlogger. She feels she can share more energy and positivity using videos than in words. Videos, says Vieira, let PWDs look another PWD in the eyes. Search diabetes video blogs on youtube.com to find these. Two other PWDs, mrmikelawson and 1happydiabetic (Bill Woods) are frequent vloggers. Kim Vlasick has started "You Can

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Letter from the EDITOR

I have just returned from the ADA Scientific Sessions. If I had to identify one theme of this year's meeting I would sum it up in one word, "Technology." We are clearly in the information and technology age in the diabetes world. While the wave started some years ago, it is now becoming a tsunami. So it seems fitting that this issue is focused on technology. Let's begin with social media.



Social media and online communities have broadened our scope. I remember not so long ago, that service area was a term we used to describe the geographic area from which our patients/clients came. We could describe it by zip codes, city, county or other geographic markers such as highways and street names. Now, however, the service area is endless through the worldwide web. Through online communities we can talk to people without them having to drive across town to physically see us.

And as we move into the online community we need to think about how our role as a healthcare professional impacts our presence online. A number of organizations have outlined some basic guidelines for using social media as a healthcare professional. When it comes to our patients, HIPAA still applies in the online community. This includes sites such as Facebook, Twitter and even a site like 'Caring Bridge.' The following tips are adapted from *The American Medical Association* and offer some good basic suggestions for all clinicians using social media:

- Maintain a positive and professional presence.
- Use the privacy settings and regularly monitor your Internet presence.

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AADE American Association
of Diabetes Educators

200 W. Madison St., Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606



Do This Project” on her website textingmydiabetes.com. She’s encouraging PWDs and loved ones to create and post vlogs.

Blogsphere’s Benefits

Diabetes was custom-made for the blogosphere: a chronic disease which requires the person or loved ones’ care and attention 24/7/365. This global space, which now includes blogs, twitter chats, photos shared on flickr and pinterest, blogtalkradio, and more, offers PWDs and/or their caregivers a global space for resources, knowledge sharing and, most importantly, SUPPORT.

Many PWDs engaged in the Diabetes Online Community (DOC), as it’s referred to, now realize they’re not alone. From fears of complications to dealing with hypoglycemia, travel, new technologies and more, the DOC is a space for people to learn, share, get support, have comraderie and even fun. (As an educator for many years I’m viewing the connections and support PWD are finding within the DOC both heartwarming and critical to improved diabetes care.) Don’t consider this an exclusive club just for PWD. PWD want more people to know about the diabetes blogosphere and want diabetes educators to help spread the word and get engaged.

Top Diabetes Blogs—Read and Recommend

Here’s an alphabetical list of seven top diabetes blogs along with quotes from the blogger describing their site and why they developed it. While there’s no official ranking, these blogs/bloggers often appear on the top of published lists.^{1,2} For other diabetes blogs/bloggers check out the list on Diabetes Advocates.³ In addition, the author has compiled a resource for educators to introduce PWDs to the DOC.⁴

Blog: diabetesdaily.com

Blogger(s): Elizabeth (PWD type 1) and David Edelman (spouse), and other bloggers

Description: “At *diabetesdaily.com*, we educate PWD and their loved ones and help them live happier, healthier lives.”

Why: “To connect PWDs around the world so they wouldn’t feel so alone.”

Blog: diabetesmine.com

Blogger(s): Amy Tenderich (PWD LADA), Allison Blass (PWD type 1), Mike Hoskins (PWD type 1) and guest bloggers (which has included a diabetes educator from time to time)

Description: “To offer the diabetes community excellent information along with enlightening and entertaining content that they care about. We call it “a diabetes newspaper with a personal twist.”

Why: “After my diagnosis (2003), I felt terribly alone and couldn’t find the connections and real-life advice I was looking for, so I set out to create a valuable networking place and that’s what diabetesmine.com has become.”

Blog: On website: diabetesstories.com

Huffington Post blog:

huffingtonpost.com/riva-greenberg

Blogger(s): Riva Greenberg (PWD type 1)

Description: “My objective with Huffington Post blogs is three-fold: 1) Advocate for PWD, 2) Communicate about new advances and thinking in diabetes care, and 3) Help health care providers be more effective with PWD to achieve more successful outcomes.”

Why: “I see writing for Huffington Post as a way to reach many, many people involved with diabetes who might not be reading diabetes blogs and magazines.”

Blog: d-mom.com

Blogger(s): Leighann Calentine (mom of child with type 1)

Description: “I launched D-Mom Blog: “the sweet life with a diabetic child” in 2010 to share our experiences including counting carbs, carrying juice boxes, navigating school and sports and more. A key goal is create a community for parents of children with diabetes.”

Why: “Shortly after my daughter’s type 1 diagnosis at age 3 I reached out to others online and began sharing our story both as a way of finding support and to get my feelings out.”

Blog: scottsdabetes.com

Blogger(s): Scott Johnson (PWD type 1)

Description: “Sharing my successes, my struggles, and everything in between. I’ve been writing my blog since 2004.”

Why: “I started writing as a way to cope with the thoughts and feelings that were bubbling to the surface in my life with diabetes.”

Blog: sixuntilme.com

Blogger(s): Kerri Sparling (PWD type 1)

Description: “I’ve been writing my blog since May 2005. I manage diabetes by the mantra, *Diabetes doesn’t define me, but it helps explain me.*”

Why: “Before starting my blog, I didn’t know anyone else with diabetes. But now I am a proud member of a vast DOC who proves every day that I’m not alone. The positive impact on my emotional and physical health has been tremendous.”

Blog: textingmypasspancreas.com

Blogger(s): Kim Vlasnik (PWD type 1)

Description: “Sharing my real life with diabetes - the good, the bad, the annoying and the difficult—with a few doses of humor and levity.”

Why: “Living with diabetes can feel isolating and demoralizing, but finding peer-to-peer support and people who ‘get it’ can transform how we feel about and care for ourselves, giving us renewed motivation and confidence.”

And don’t forget to read AADE’s very own blog:

AADE Blog: diabeteseducator.org/blog

Blogger(s): Amy Campbell, RD, CDE; Carla Cox, PhD, RD, CSSD, CDE; Karen Kemmis, PT, DPT, MS, CDE; Iris Sanchez, DNP, FNP, BC-ADM, CDE; and Barbara Walz, RN, BSN, CDE.

Description: Five diabetes educators from varied disciplines blog on a wide range of topics of interest to their fellow educators. Check out a new blog post each week.

To summarize, the Internet has given birth to blogs, bloggers and many social networking venues. These are multiplying and helping PWD and their loved ones connect in supportive, nurturing spaces. Diabetes educators should be aware of diabetes blogs, bloggers and social networking venues for PWD and recommend these resources to their clients. Last, but not least, diabetes educators should increase engagement with the DOC because working together we’re a powerful combination. ■

Hope Warshaw is owner of Hope Warshaw Associates, LLC.

Resources:

1. The 17 Best Diabetes Blogs of 2012. Healthline. www.healthline.com/health-slideshow/best-diabetes-blogs. Accessed 5/3/2012.
2. SharecareNow Names the Top 10 Influencers in the Online Diabetes Community. Sharecare. www.sharecare.com/static/sharecarenow-names-top-10-influencers-in-online-diabetes-community. Accessed 5/3/2012.
3. Diabetesadvocates.org, list of members’ blogs http://diabetesadvocates.org/files/2011/07/dhf_da_brochure_2011_web.pdf. Accessed 5/3/2012.
4. Handout (PDF) to help diabetes educators introduce clients to the Diabetes Online Community—www.hopewarshaw.com/connectdiabetes.