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Revise Names of Type 1 & 2 Diabetes to Reflect the Nature of Each Disease

Petition by

Jeanette Collier and Jamie Perez

Thank you for signing the petition "Revise Names of Type 1 & 2 Diabetes to Reflect the Nature of Each Disease"

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We are two moms who's lives were turned upside down when our sons were diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. Our sons face this life-threatening disease with strength, courage and perseverance despite being subjected on a daily basis to ignorance and misconceptions. It is with their future in mind that we file this petition to bring clarity to two very different diseases - Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes. The facts surrounding both of these conditions are increasingly confused by the media. Revising the type classifications to more accurately reflect the nature of onset for each form of Diabetes would alleviate the confusion and would not only benefit those living with both diseases, but it would allow awareness to be raised in a clear manner. We hope that you will join us in this effort.

Thank you,

Jamie and Jeanette

Type 1 Diabetes and Type 2 Diabetes are two very different conditions; yet their names are only distinguished by a number. Their 'type' is rarely, if ever, clarified when discussed by the media or the public. This leads to widespread confusion surrounding the differences between these two forms of Diabetes. Our petition addresses this issue within four primary goals:

1. To end the widespread misconceptions regarding Type 1 & Type 2 Diabetes

2. To allow advocates of both diseases to properly educate the public and bring awareness to their unique form of Diabetes

3. To facilitate more effective fundraising to meet the specific goals of each type of Diabetes

4. To foster a harmonious relationship between the Type 1 & Type 2 communities

The misconceptions regarding Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes start with the subtle distinction in the names, or rather 'the numbers'. This is compounded by the surge of Type 2 in children and adults, and the onslaught of media coverage that fails to clarify the 'type'. While the well-publicized coverage is improving the lives of both those living with Type 2, and those on the path to developing the disease, it in no way relates to Type 1. Diabetes is frequently the subject of television shows, such as "The Biggest Loser" and "Dr. Oz"; however, these shows often perpetuate false claims of reversing and curing diabetes. With no mention of 'Type', the public perceives all diabetes as one and the same. This misconception is especially dangerous for children with Type 1. They do not yet have a voice to protect themselves from the ignorance and confusion that is putting their lives at risk. Teachers, coaches, medics, nurses, and others involved in caring for Type 1 children often share the same misconceptions as the general public and do not think of Type 1 as different from Type 2. Dismissing a child's Type 1 Diabetes

as less than a critical condition could result in a life-threatening situation in a matter of minutes. Unfortunately, the incidence of Type 1 is also on the rise; but unlike Type 2, the public awareness campaigns do not reach their full potential because of the confusion caused by using numbers as names. As a result, T1 symptoms are brushed off as the flu, by parents and the medical community alike, resulting in a preventable serious state of health or even death. These tragic stories are making the news on a regular basis, but the media often misses the opportunity to educate the public on signs and symptoms of Type 1. Historically, the confusion between Type 1 and Type 2 did not extend to children. It used to be that childhood diabetes was limited to Type 1, thus the previous name of Juvenile Diabetes. While this terminology is now outdated, the general public was mostly familiar with the distinction. However, the recent rise of Type 2 in children, combined with the fact that Juvenile Diabetes (Type 1) is increasingly being diagnosed in adults, prompted the elimination of the term ‘Juvenile Diabetes’ and resulted in current classifications. There are other forms of Diabetes with names that more accurately reflect their nature, such as Gestational Diabetes, Maturity-Onset Diabetes of the Young (MODY)and Latent Autoimmune Diabetes in Adults (LADA). What nature does Type 1 and Type 2 indicate? They are the most common forms of Diabetes, yet their names remain the most generic and are easily confused.

Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes are both serious diseases; however, they are very different in their risk factors, their nature and onset, and their treatment and management intensity. Type 1 Diabetes is a chronic, autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system destroys the insulin producing cells in the pancreas. Type 1 is never caused by diet or lifestyle, the onset is rapid and it cannot be prevented or cured. All children and adults with Type 1 require insulin 24 hours a day, by means of multiple daily injections or infusion through a pump, to stay alive. Their blood sugar is impacted by everything in their daily lives, such as exercise, mental activity, stress, excitement, and food. There are nearly 3 million children and adults currently battling Type 1 Diabetes. Type 2 Diabetes is a metabolic disorder in which the pancreas is still capable of producing insulin; however, the cells of the body have become insulin resistant. It accounts for more than 90% of those currently living with diabetes. Type 2 is most often caused by a combination of lifestyle and genetic factors, but not always as the media suggests. Some factors, such as diet and activity level, are within a person's control; but others, such as aging, biochemical responses and genetics, are not. Type 2 Diabetes is initially managed through modification of diet and exercise; however, oral medication and insulin may become necessary as the disease progresses. The onset of Type 2 is gradual and in many cases, early intervention can delay onset, alleviate symptoms, or even prevent it's development altogether.

Public education and awareness is crucial for both 'types' of Diabetes. Each disease has a different message that needs to be delivered to the public in order to properly treat those affected by it. In addition, the fundraising goals of Type 1 and Type 2 have a different focus. Research towards a cure is important for Type 2, but fundraising and spending is often allocated to early intervention and life-style education. This emphasis does not benefit Type 1 as it cannot be prevented or controlled by lifestyle. A cure is the only hope for Type 1's, but the

name confusion is inhibiting that goal as the media expands their coverage of Type 2. A name change that more accurately reflects the nature of each disease would alleviate the confusion and allow advocates of both groups to communicate their personal message and focus on their unique fundraising goals. Type 2 will continue to garner media exposure regardless of the name it bears; however, a new name, combined with a focused educational campaign, would help remove the stigma that has become attached to Type 2 and enable the public to see the disease in a new light. For Type 1, this name change will ensure an identity that it urgently needs to advocate for a cure.

Finally, the lack of distinct names for the type classifications for Type 1 and Type 2 has created a divide within the Diabetic community. There is a perception that one 'type' is worse than the other. The current terminology suggests a hierarchy of sorts. This should not be the case as both are destructive diseases. The media and general public are misinformed about Type 2 and those living with the disease struggle daily with stigmas, such as "they caused their disease" and "it can be cured with diet and exercise". The magnitude of media coverage for Type 2, combined with the lack of 'type' clarification, has inadvertantly attached the term 'diabetes' to Type 2. This leaves Type 1 without a name for which to advocate. This petition is about clarity. A clarity that is much needed for each group to pave the way for better education and awareness.

It is time for new names, an end to misconceptions, uniquely focused advocacy, goal directed fundraising, and a harmonious and supportive relationship among those living with any type of Diabetes. We are not requesting a significant disease reclassification. We are simply requesting new names that properly reflect the nature of onset for Type 1 & Type 2- something not accomplished with numbers. THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY SHOULD DETERMINE APPROPRIATE NAMES, AS THEY ARE MOST QUALIFIED ; but just as an EXAMPLE, the nature of onset for Type 1 would be reflected in a name such as Beta Cell Autoimmunity Diabetes (BCA) and the nature of onset of Type 2 in a name such as Insulin Resistance Onset Diabetes (IRD). A name change is not a monumental task. It has been done before. The time has come to do it again. The time has come to do it in a way that respects the opinions of those individuals living with these two similar, yet very different diseases.