

Project Direbetes Project Report

Members: Dylan Chow (L) 3O204

Ashton Choe 3O202

Darius Fong 3O203

Liu Guan Wan Brandon 3O214

Ng Tze Yang Mavryk 3O218

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Introduction

Project Dire-betes aims to raise awareness about diabetes to youths, in particular primary school students. By working in partnership with Diabetes Singapore, we organize various activities in order to achieve this goal. The logo of Diabetes Singapore is shown below.



Background

In the beginning, we were looking for causes we could help support, as well as any prevalent issues that were impacting Singaporeans. In the end, we stumbled upon the problem of an increased number of diabetics that was being increasingly mentioned by the government.

Area of Concern

1 in 9 Singaporeans have diabetes (PM Lee, 2015). 1 in 3 of these diabetics were initially unaware that they had diabetes until they were informed during a medical checkup (National Registry of Diseases, 11 November 2014). 30% of diabetics suffer from young-onset type 2 diabetes (Singapore General Hospital, 2015) and the average age of diagnosis amongst this 30% was ‘quite young’ at 30 years old (Dr Goh Su-Yen, 2015).

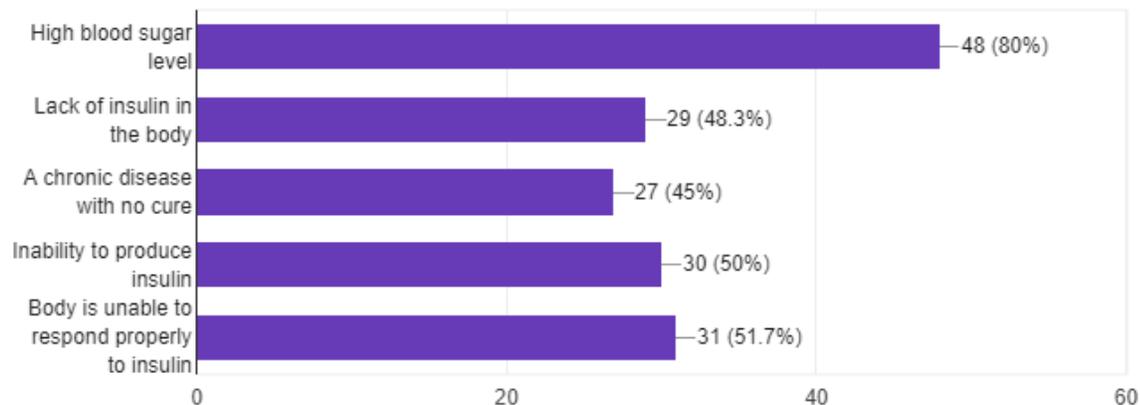
From the statistics, we concluded that:

- The number of younger diabetics are increasing
- This is due to a lack of awareness about diabetes

In order to gain a better understanding of which areas of diabetes Singaporeans lacked understanding of, we conducted our own survey via Google Forms on our schoolmates.

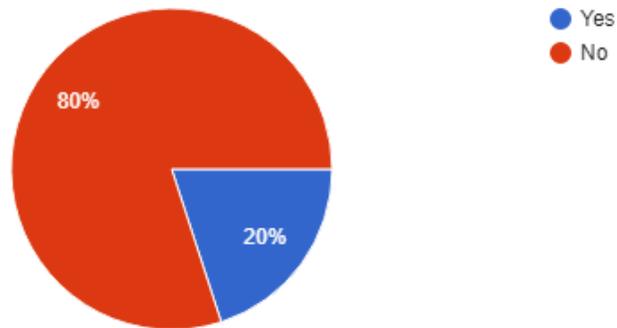
Which of the following are possible explanations of what diabetes is? (You may have multiple answers)

60 responses



Do you believe you have a good understanding of what diabetes is?

60 responses



We concluded that Singaporeans did not fully understand what diabetes was, in particular the symptoms of diabetes and how to identify diabetes.

Given that younger Singaporeans are becoming less aware of what diabetes is, we decided to help resolve this issue.

Activities

Three main activities were carried out: setting up of Instagram account, handing out of pamphlets and school talks.

Setting up of Instagram Account

In April, we set up an Instagram account for our project. As many youths are active on social media platforms such as Instagram, we set up the account in the hopes of raising awareness about diabetes to these online youths. We used the account to post trivia about diabetes and its symptoms, while publicising our activities.

Handing Out of Pamphlets

In order to inform youths about the symptoms of diabetes and what actions they should take should they suspect themselves to suffer from diabetes, we designed a pamphlet and handed it out.

In May, we confirmed the details of the activity with the organization as well as the dates on which we would hand out the pamphlets. Soon after, we designed and finalised the pamphlet design after running it through the organization. We also scouted the areas where we would hand out the pamphlets to ensure that there was enough space and people to carry out the activity. On the last week of May, we printed the pamphlets and prepared to carry out the activity.

The pamphlets were handed out on:

- 12 June
- 18 June
- 02 July (Youth Day)
- 15 July
- 21 July

The pamphlets were handed out at:

- Dhoby Gaut (Plaza Singapore)
- Bugis (Bugis Junction)
- Somerset (Area around 313 Somerset)

It was prearranged that the organisation would print out the pamphlets and take them to the venues. Mavryk and Dylan were in charge of replenishing the helpers' supply of pamphlets. The handing out of posters was split into two shifts. The first shift was from 0900h - 1200h. The second shift was from 1330h – 1630h. About 4000 pamphlets would be handed out every session. Over 5 sessions, about 20 000 pamphlets were given out.

An image of the pamphlet we designed can be found below.

DO YOU HAVE 2 OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING?

-
- FATIGUE
 - BLURRED VISION
 - EXTREME THIRST
 - RAPID WEIGHT LOSS
 - FREQUENT URINATION
 - INACTIVE LIFESTYLE
 - OVERWEIGHT
 - HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
 - HIGH CHOLESTROL

CHECK WITH
YOUR DOCTOR
YOU MAY HAVE
TYPE 1 DIABETES

YOU ARE AT RISK
OF DEVELOPING
TYPE 2 DIABETES

1 IN 2 PEOPLE WITH DIABETES
DON'T KNOW THEY HAVE IT
GET CHECKED TODAY

School Talks

In an effort to raise awareness about diabetes to primary school students, we reached out to 52 schools and asked them to allow us to carry out talks in their schools. We called up all the schools which had not responded after 2 weeks and asked them again. In the end, 6 schools accepted. They would like to have the talks after their students' examinations in the last few weeks of Term 4. We have informed them to contact the organisation in the future for more details as their chosen date nears.

The following is an example of the email we sent to the school

To whoever it may concern,

My name is Dylan Chow and I am a member of Project Di-a-betes. As we have identified that more and more young people are becoming diabetic, we aim to raise awareness about diabetes among young children.

As such, I am emailing you on behalf of my group to kindly ask for your assistance in giving our organisation some time to have a talk with your school's students. The talks will be carried out by members of the organisation we are working with, Diabetes Singapore.

We aim for the talks to take place in Term 3. Should your school be interested in having us, could you kindly reply to this email providing details of possible dates that we could carry out the talks?

I look forward to a hearing from you soon.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,
Dylan

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Reflections

Handing out of pamphlets

Problem: By just giving out the pamphlets, we were limited to a specific area and could only give out a limited number of pamphlets. Some people would just throw the pamphlet away without looking at it

Solution: Wear a signboard to attract more attention and paste posters around the area (with the management's permission)

Feedback: Members of the public said that the pamphlet designs were simple and easy to understand. It also contained information that they had previously not known.

The organization said that they might want to adopt similar pamphlet designs due to its increased effectiveness as compared to existing pamphlets.

School Talks

Problem: We found that many schools wanted the talks to be carried out after their school's examinations and had already made plans for other activities during that period.

Solution: We determined that we should have contacted the schools earlier when they still had slots for the talks.

Feedback: The organisation said that it was good to propose to have a talk focused solely on diabetes as many schools do not have this. The talk is a good way to increase awareness and debunk myths and misconceptions students might have.

Overall

As a group, we have sat down together and reflected on what we have done over the course of this project. Through this project, we feel that we have learnt how to empathise with others' situations and think from a bigger picture and a more open perspective on what we can do to help. We feel that we underestimated the commitment needed to make a service learning project successful. In the future, we hope that we will be able to contribute more effectively and help more people.