

Executive summary

Diabetes is rapidly becoming a global public health problem of epidemic proportions. However, it has been demonstrated scientifically that diabetes education helps reduce unnecessary mortality and morbidity from poorly controlled diabetes. For this reason, the Program on Non-Communicable Diseases of the Division of Disease Prevention and Control of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) conducted a special study to obtain information about diabetes education programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. The present document is organized as an inventory. Education programs for people with type 2 diabetes were selected and information was gathered in two stages. An initial list was drawn up of national programs and specialists in the following countries: Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Cuba. This first stage of information gathering lasted about 3 months (December 1999 to March 2000). In the second stage (August to December 2000), information was collected from Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, and Puerto Rico. This document describes the available information on background, methodology, objectives, materials, and, insofar as possible, evaluation of the educational programs.

This inventory includes information for 19 countries and 21 diabetes education initiatives (3 in the case of Chile). All the programs for which information was received are included, even those not well structured and those that replicate programs of other countries (as in the case of PEDNID-LA). The intention is to profile every educational effort so that steps can be taken to complete and improve the deficient ones on the basis of other, more structured programs.

This inventory is intended to contribute to the development of diabetes education programs in countries that currently do not have any education program for people with type 2 diabetes. The document can also be used to validate existing programs in the Region. Finally, we hope the document promotes the sharing of experiences and the valuable lessons that have been learned by those who are dedicated to diabetes education in the Region. In addition, standards for diabetes education programs developed by the education task group of the Declaration of the Americas on Diabetes (DOTA) are presented in Annex 1. The standards are included in view of the importance of their dissemination and future review.