

# An oral history of diabetes

MAJOR RESEARCH RESOURCES 2005/2006

## BACKGROUND

A project led by David Matthews, Professor of Diabetes Medicine and Chairman of the Oxford Centre for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism, explored and documented changes in the diagnosis, treatment and management of diabetes in the UK over the last century. Oral history consultant Helen Lloyd compiled the stories of 50 patients diagnosed with type 1 or type 2 diabetes between 1927 and 1997. Patients described living with diabetes, its effects on work and family, and the changing attitudes to diabetes among health professionals and the public.

## ADVANCE

An interactive website, [www.diabetes-stories.co.uk](http://www.diabetes-stories.co.uk), was launched on 30 September 2005, providing full unedited recordings, transcripts, written summaries and short audio samples of the stories. Search tools enable subject-specific sections of the stories to be located. By drawing on experiences of individuals diagnosed during different decades of the 20th century, the stories present evidence of the impact of medical technology on diabetes and the changing role of health professionals in its management. The work also helps to illuminate the role that personal relationships can play in promoting health.

## HOW IT'S MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The website is intended for use by historians, health professionals and people living with diabetes, as an interactive teaching, training and information resource. It has received critical acclaim among diabetes support groups (such as the Insulin Dependent Diabetes Trust, UK; the International Diabetes Federation, Belgium; the Maestro Project, Canada; ezeeDiabetes, South Africa; Diabetes Counselling, Australia; and Gruppo Giovani FAND, Italy) and has been well used to date: by 9 February 2007 the website had received over 770 000 hits. In June 2006, the website won Oxford University's IT in Teaching and Learning Award.

## REFERENCES

[www.diabetes-stories.co.uk](http://www.diabetes-stories.co.uk)

## WELLCOME TRUST GRANT

History of Medicine Project grant, 'Oral history of diabetes in the 20th century', 2003, two years, £97 776.

Highlight produced October 2006



Above: At Diabetic Camp in Harrogate, 1952 (kneeling second from right) - interviewee Allan Jones, diagnosed in 1945

*Diabetes Stories*



Above: Interviewee, Monica Winn, who was diagnosed in 1927

*Diabetes Stories*