

First integrated Diabetes Clinic in Belgium Single structure to cover multidisciplinary consultation, expertise and research

Diabetes has become endemic throughout the world, also in cosmopolitan Brussels. This is why University Hospital Brussels has launched Belgium's first Diabetes Clinic. Traditional diabetes care in hospitals tends to be both complex and fragmented. However diabetes patients (in Brussels) now more than ever require a tailored care trajectory which caters for cultural diversity. Bringing together all relevant disciplines within a single organisation and structure enables multidisciplinary face to face consultation, enhanced expertise and optimised research.

One out of every 12 Belgians suffers from diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is taking on epidemic proportions worldwide, as is certainly the case for Belgium's most cosmopolitan city, Brussels. Type 1 diabetes has clearly also become more prevalent in recent years, particularly among young people. Fortunately diabetes and its consequences are a treatable condition. Diabetes patients who rely on traditional hospital care are commonly referred to diverse specialist physicians at different locations. Centralised electronic patient files cannot replace face to face multidisciplinary consultation between caregivers. There is also a risk of too much attention being focused on a single problem related to, or caused by diabetes.



Today's diabetes patients more than ever require tailor-made treatments which ideally will integrate primary, secondary and tertiary care. Certain cases require very specific treatment within a hospital. This is demonstrated by the drop in the number of lower limb amputations following the creation of tertiary care foot clinics in Belgium. University Hospital Brussels' Diabetes Clinic is aiming to further optimise the provision of specialist multidisciplinary care. The Diabetes Clinic's 4 key priorities are: multidisciplinary consultation, multidisciplinary expertise,

multidisciplinary research and a multicultural approach.

Virtually all disciplines with a diabetes dimension have been grouped within a single structure (e.g. similar to an oncology centre). The specialists involved are emphatically dedicated to and interested in diabetes. The process of regular, direct multidisciplinary consultations will lead to individualised care for diabetes patients, with specialists learning from one another, and will also enable clear treatment paths to be set and avoid overlapping examinations. This approach will further enable the provision of an economically viable multicultural care system, which is absolutely essential within the Brussels milieu. Lastly the concept of a university Diabetes Clinic facilitates the optimisation of multidisciplinary research.

This new approach moreover guarantees a workable link with the hi-tech *translational* research which has been conducted on the Jette Campus for more than 20 years within the so-called

Center for Beta Cell Therapy in Diabetes. The main priorities for the next few years are beta cell transplants, beta cell regeneration and stem cell transplants. The Diabetes Clinic is ready to perform testing in these areas.

The new structure was officially launched on Thursday 19 May. The consultation, education and research spaces within this facility have been adapted to the needs of diabetes patients. In addition its infrastructure has been fully tailored to patients' needs, in particular patients with reduced mobility.



Steve Stevaert, Chairman of Gault Millau Belgium, showcased the Diabetes Clinic's demonstration kitchen. Foot pressure measurements were demonstrated to assess walking postures. A healthy diet and regular physical exercise are an integral part of the treatment of every diabetes patient.

University Hospital Brussels (UZ Brussel) is an academic hospital which counts about 3.200 staff. It is linked to the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy of the Free University of Brussels on the Jette Campus. With its 721 hospital beds, UZ Brussel each year treats more than 28,000 in-patients and 400,000 outpatients, both national and international. University Hospital Brussels' values are based on three principles: Dutch language, pluralistic and community-focused. As a university hospital, UZ Brussel also fulfils a teaching mission and conducts scientific research. Further information is available on www.uzbrussel.be

Further information for JOURNALISTS

Communication Department UZ Brussel (University Hospital Brussels)

- Edgard Eeckman +32 (0)2 477 80 81 / +32 (0)475 96 00 67
- Inge Staelens +32 (0)2 477 80 80 / +32 (0)485 30 66 57