

“I am sure we have saved many lives”

A ground-breaking initiative which saw an ESNEFT clinician bring together a group of diabetes experts to develop guidance to support patients with COVID-19 has received an award in recognition of its impact on care.

The National Diabetes COVID-19 Response Group Collaborative, which was set up Consultant in Diabetes and Endocrinology Prof Gerry Rayman, was presented with the judges' special award in the Quality in Care Awards 2021.

Prof Rayman established the group in March 2020 by bringing together 19 clinical leads, diabetologists, specialist nurses, pharmacists and psychologists from across the UK, who met in their own time to develop guidance documents for use around the country.

Their aim was to maintain consistent support for people with diabetes and provide COVID-19 specific guidance for specialists and non-specialists.

Prof Rayman, who is based at Ipswich Diabetes Centre, said: “From early feedback from colleagues at the start of the pandemic, we observed that that patients with diabetes who contracted COVID-19 appeared to have poorer outcomes than others, while in some cases the infection went onto trigger new onset diabetes, confirmed in later studies.

“At the same time, some of the medications prescribed for COVID-19 and for diabetes could be contraindicated, with potentially serious consequences.

“The collaborative group played an absolutely crucial role by developing pragmatic guidance documents for clinicians, together with information for patients to address the metabolic challenges associated with COVID-19 infection. Usually these would take six months to a year to produce, but we worked extremely hard and were able to finalise and publish each of them in peer review journals within just two or three weeks.

“The documents have been used around the country, indeed globally, and since then and have made a huge difference – I am sure we have saved many lives through this work.

“I am incredibly proud of the work the group did and am delighted that their commitment and dedication was recognised by the judges.”

The judges said: “This initiative provoked an emotional response from the judges and they felt very proud that this work had taken place within the diabetes community. This was an outstanding initiative directly supporting frontline healthcare professionals during an incredibly challenging time.

“The documents generated will have been (and still are) used in every hospital site in the country. Amazing work, fabulous team.”

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