

Merck Takes a Global Step Forward in the Fight against Diabetes

– 1day, 1km, 1purpose –

On April 20th 2007, Merck employees from across the globe took a united step forward in an effort to display their commitment to overcoming the endemic that is diabetes. In demonstration of this pledge, hundreds of Merck employees in every head office in over 40 countries, all moved forward across one kilometer, at the same time, on the same day for the same cause.

This global initiative, known as the 1day, 1km, 1purpose campaign, meant that members of staff worldwide had to cover a distance of one kilometer by engaging in some form of exercise. This because physical activity is a major component in combating the growing global burden of diabetes.

Locally, Merck staged a fun run/walk, on the premises of its Wadeville production facility. From factory workers to directors, all members of staff were encouraged to participate with even a wheelchair-bound individual travelling the distance in support of those living with this chronic disease. Sports media

personality, Arnold Geerts, who officially started the race, also put his best foot forward by running the one kilometer route and challenging competitors to beat his time.

With that said, the event was not all about fun and games. Every member of the 36-strong staff compliment was given the opportunity to dig deep and donate money to the Centre for Diabetes and Endocrinology (CDE). Says Merck product manager for diabetes, Taki Radzilani, "The response has been incredible and has far exceeded my expectations. The generosity shown by my colleagues has been overwhelming in the extreme with donations made by security guards and managing directors alike."

In total, R10 000.00 was raised and this was presented to a representative of the CDE in a ceremony held directly after the race. This leading stakeholder in managed care for diabetes in South Africa is to put the money towards the Children Living with Diabetes initiative. Merck Serono's drive to assist with the prevention of this disease area is not only limited to leading by example through exercise. Their commitment is also evident in the success of its gold standard in the treatment of diabetes, Glucophage®, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

The breakthrough that is Glucophage®, a dimethylbiguanide, was made possible by French physician and pharmacologist, Jean Sterne (1919 – 1997)

in the mid 1950's. Twenty years earlier, scientists had already documented the blood sugar lowering effect of biguanides. Due to its unique mechanism of action, and comparatively few and mild side-effects, metformin is the only biguanide to have stood the test of time and continues to be a gold standard in the management of type 2 diabetes. Glucophage® ("glucose eater") had its first major clinical trial results in 1957.

Today, Glucophage® has an exciting future. With 5500 scientific and medical publications, a 50-year track record, the introduction of market-expanding line extensions and the growing wave of support for the earlier use of metformin right from diagnosis of type-2 diabetes, this drug of choice has much to look forward to.

Just as Merck employees have taken a step forward in the prevention of this endemic, so too has their gold standard in diabetic treatment continued to step up the plate to gain maximum benefit for patients living with diabetes.

Started in 1668, Merck is a global pharmaceutical and chemical company and is the oldest organisation of its kind in the world. Its roots stretch back as far as the 17th century. Today, Merck is a worldwide entrepreneurial group supplying high quality pharmaceutical and chemical products. There are over 192 affiliates that operate in 55 countries, employing over 28 500 people.

For further information contact +27 11 372-5000 or visit www.merck.co.za



Florah Radebe not allowing her disability to hamper her participation in the fun run/walk in support of those living with diabetes.



Godwin Jacob (left) presenting the funds raised by Merck employees to Dr David Segal of the Centre for Diabetes and Endocrinology.



Arnold Geerts (right) congratulates Goodman Radebe for almost beating his time of 3 minutes and 41 seconds record.