

PRESS RELEASE



«App-Fighting diabetes!»: An innovative application for people with Diabetes by the Hellenic Diabetes Association

This digital application was developed within the context of training patients about the importance of disease self-management, adaptation to suitable lifestyle and treatment adherence

Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus is taking on epidemic proportions, since the percentage of newly diagnosed individuals marks an explosive increase over the last years, in Greece as well as globally

Monday, January 16th, 2017. The **pioneering application «App-Fighting Diabetes!»**, which was created by the **Hellenic Diabetes Association (EDE)** with the support of **ELPEN**, is **now available** for **diabetic individuals** to download on their **smartphone or tablet**. The purpose of this application is to function as an **every-day counselor** for people suffering from **type 2 diabetes**, with regard to **important issues** pertaining to disease management.

The thematic categories, which can be browsed through by the users within the digital application, are **eight**; they are related to the multifaceted and most important aspects of diabetes mellitus.

Each category is inspired by the letters of the *greek* word «**Διαβήτης**» (which stands for “diabetes”), including: **Diet**, **Medical intervention**, **Avoiding complications**, **Patient help/support**, **Every-day self-control & care**, **Modification of risk factors**, **Daily exercise & Regulation goals**.

The scientific branch of the application was managed by Pathologist/Diabetologist, **Dr. Ioannis Ntoupis**, while the sub-topics were **developed by reputable healthcare professionals**, in order to include both **recent data** about the treatment of diabetes and **advice** on the **lifestyle improvement** of individuals suffering from this disease. The “App-Fighting Diabetes!” application can be installed on an android or iOS environment easily, rapidly, and for free.

The “App-Fighting Diabetes!” application was presented in a Press Conference, during which speakers included: **Mr. Nikolas Papanas**, **President of EDE**, Associate Professor of Pathology/Diabetes Mellitus, Manager of the 2nd Pathology Clinic Diabetes Centre, Democritus University of Thrace, Alexandroupolis; **Mr. Ioannis Ntoupis**, Pathologist/Diabetologist, Dr. of Athens University, Assistant Professor of Diabetology, Cardiff University Medical School UK, Director of Diabetes Department Medical Centre, Palaio Faliro, Director of Pathology Department and Diabetes Cabinet of the Navy Hospital; and **Mr. Alexandros Gkinis**, Physician/Endocrinologist and Medical Director at ELPEN.

Due to the explosive increase of diabetes mellitus cases, which are nowadays taking on epidemic proportions, the application **could become a valuable “weapon” available for diabetic individuals**, since the acquired information could help them even to avoid significant complications for their health. The presented complications primarily concern the vasculature system and include: stroke, infarction, circulation impairment in the lower limbs, renal impairment, peripheral nerve impairment, as well as ocular impairment. Ocular health is mainly threatened by retinopathy, which includes impairment of small blood vessels in the posterior part of the eye that can lead to hemorrhages, retinal detachment with serious sight reduction or even blindness. Regular monitoring is recommended in order to detect any complications at an early stage; for instance, through annual leg and eye examinations.

Any complications can be prevented by careful glucose regulation, treatment of arterial hypertension and hyperlipidemia, but also by lifestyle modification through increased physical exercise, weight control and smoking cessation.

Mr. Papanas referred to the reasons behind this constant increase in type 2 diabetes mellitus, across the globe and in Greece, noting that *“this increase is primarily caused by **sedentary lifestyle, lack of exercise and obesity**. Over the last years, this lifestyle has been adopted by children and adolescents as well, which augments the risk of developing diabetes for an ever-increasing number of individuals. Diagnosis should be done early enough, because, through appropriate diet and suitable treatment, diabetic individuals can avoid or minimize any progressive damages in their body organs (e.g. eyes, legs, heart, kidneys, etc.) in the long-term”*. Mr. Papanas added that, with the **appropriate regulation**, *“we can avoid or reduce chronic complications, we can decrease the number of hospitalization days and we can avoid premature death”*.

Referring to the symptoms one must pay attention to, **Mr. Papanas** noted that type 2 diabetes, especially during its early stages, **is asymptomatic**. Symptoms are only manifested when blood glucose presents a significant increase, and they include, among others, hunger, thirst, weight loss and excessive diuresis.

Mr. Papanas also talked about the **consequences** of the **economic crisis**, unemployment and income shrinkage, which make it difficult for diabetic individuals to cope with their treatment cost participation, even though, in some cases, the participation percentage in certain drugs' cost has decreased. Mr. Papanas emphasized that: *“the broad sense of pessimism and insecurity **does not favor an adherence** to the requirements of a chronic treatment, and therefore, it **becomes harder both for physicians to accomplish their work and for type 2 diabetes patients to achieve their therapeutic goals**.”*

With regard to the new drugs that are currently available for diabetic patients, Mr. Papanas noted: *«Among them, pills are characterized by the absence of hypoglycemia and weight increase, while in some cases they help reduce weight and arterial pressure, and prevent cardiovascular events. Among insulins, the newer ones are even more user-friendly and they are characterized by even fewer hypoglycemics.»*

Mr. Ntoupis pointed out the **good news** for people suffering from diabetes, as well as the **several new therapeutic options** that are now available for the **fight against hyperglycemia**. He also marked that *“there are **significant technological achievements** in the **glucose control** domain as well. Nonetheless, a **proper, daily disease self-management**, along with appropriate patient lifestyle adaptations and adherence to treatment regimen, remain the **basic pillar** for a successful regulation of diabetes.”*

Referring to the digital application **“App-Fighting diabetes!”**, **Mr. Ntoupis** emphasized that *“this application was developed in order to **cover an unmet current need for patient training** in matters pertaining to the everyday-life with diabetes, such as diet and exercise, treatments, complications, lower limb and dental care, the importance of achieving treatment goals, the value of self-control and the abstinence from smoking.”* He **expressed his conviction** that *“it will constitute a **friendly tool** for all type 2 diabetes patients. Through the training and guidance that it can provide to patients, in combination with close medical monitoring, the*

*application will contribute to the **achievement of individualized patient goals**, ultimately aiming at avoiding any diabetes complications and improving life quality."*

Referring to **ELPEN's commitment to an holistic healthcare and optimal support** for diabetic patients, **Mr. Gkinis** underlined that: *"we support the initiative taken by the Hellenic Diabetes Association in order to develop innovative medical applications for mobile phone and tablet devices. This is an application, which contributes to the possibility of easy and quick access to proper and reliable information for diabetic patients, and hence leads to better disease control, as well as life quality improvement through optimal disease self-management."*

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