Combatting the Rise of Diabetes in Africa
Taylor Briseno (Biology), Megan Dempsey (BME), Bobby Kumar (BME), Sarah Sawatzki (RBE)
Advisor: Professor Jill Rufts (Biology), Professor Helen Vassallo (Business/Management)

Tanzania
- Population: 36 million
- Affected by diabetes: about 450,000
- Percentage undiagnosed: over 80%
- Diabetes-related deaths per year: 15,408
- Percent of diabetic adults living in towns: 6%
- Number of diabetologists in the country: 6
- Average income per person: $256

Type 2 Diabetes Overview
How does it happen?
- Not enough insulin produced or insulin not recognized
- Sugar builds up in blood- cells can’t function
Causes
- Overweight/obesity
- Lack of physical activity
- Unhealthy lifestyle choices
Symptoms
- Fatigue
- Thirst/frequent urination
- Unexplained weight loss
Diagnosis
- A fasting blood glucose test
- An oral glucose tolerance test
Treatments
- Diet and exercise/weight loss
- Medications (insulin if needed)

Need
Our need is to improve the education and diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes to combat the projected rise in this disease in Tanzania, Africa.

Reasons for Increase in Diabetes Prevalence
- Barriers to healthy diet; poverty, seasonal availability of food
- Scarcity of weight monitoring
- Obesity associated with affluence and authority
- Poor knowledge about balanced diet
- Only obese people seen as a difficulty

Urbanization
- Experiencing fastest rate of urbanization worldwide
- More people moving to urban areas
- Obesity as a sign of wealth
- Increased consumption of high-fat and energy dense diets
- High rates of obesity
- Increased marketing from unhealthy restaurants
- Decrease in physical activity
- Increased technology and transportation

Approach
Educate patients/doctors on:
- How to test and record your blood glucose
- What to eat and when
- How to take medications, if needed
- How to recognize/treat low and high blood sugar
- How to handle sick days
- Where to buy diabetes supplies and how to store them (if affordable)
- Role of family members/support system

How:
- Utilize an educational pamphlet for doctors
- Utilize a separate, illiterate-friendly pamphlet for patients
- Distribute pamphlets in local clinics

Breaking Down Barriers
- Belief in health benefits/fear of consequences
- Empowerment/Self-confidence
- Locus of control
- Debunk myths about diabetes
- Address illiteracy issues

References

Without a major breakthrough in preventing and treating diabetes, the number of cases in sub-Saharan Africa is projected to double, reaching 24 million by 2030.” -International Diabetes Federation (IDF)