

Stories from Jimma and Gondar chronic disease projects

1. The burden to mother of a diabetic son



Zahara is mother of a 12 years old Type 1 diabetic boy who was not diagnosed until one day she came to the medical OPD with symptoms of urinary tract infection. Her mouth was full of Khat, a green stimulant leave. Khat has similar effect to Amphetamine, a psycho-stimulant herb commonly used in Jimma area. I asked her why she is doing this in the clinic and expressed my disappointment and something about her not being a good example to younger people. She apologized and started to explain with tears welling up her eyes. Zahara is a single mother who supports herself and her diabetic son by selling vegetables at the village Market 'Gullit'. There is very little income and to put enough food on the table for the whole family, hence the mother eats little to save for her son. She has gone on with little or no food for days

as her 12 year old son is so hungry and eats up whatever is available in the house. She feels so much pity for him and tried to suppress her hunger with whatever is available and Khat she found out blocked her appetite better than anything else. I told her this could be diabetes and to bring her son for check-up. He was confirmed with diabetes and was registered in the paediatric side for free insulin supply until the age of 18. Her misery was over as soon as he started follow-up and treatment.

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January 2014