

SUBMISSION

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGEING ON THE REVIEW OF INSULIN PUMPS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DIABETES

I refer to the Terms of Reference 8 to 10, relating to the clinical benefits of insulin pump therapy for Type 1 Diabetes and hereby submit my Submission for your consideration.

I have two children with Type 1 Diabetes and they have both been using Insulin pumps since December 2011.

They only received the pumps because of a subsidy we were granted by the government through the Insulin Pump Program and with further help from Medtronic Australasia Pty Ltd.

We were familiar with insulin pumps but were unable to ever give any consideration to the possibility of getting them for our children. The cost of the pumps and consumables was quite simply beyond our means.

It's a fact that without the Subsidy the children would not have pumps.

My daughter ***** is now 9 years old (diagnosed when 7). The pump has been pivotal in stabilizing her blood sugar levels. Whilst we as parents were considered to be quite good at managing her diabetes, it was a daily challenge to consistently reach the optimum blood sugar levels, let alone maintain them. Prior to using a pump, ***** would have three, sometimes four incidences of low blood sugar levels (hypos) per week. As well as all the physical symptoms, this was mentally & emotionally draining for all concerned. ***** has also experienced severe hypos where she has become unconscious. She has not experienced any severe hypos since being on the pump and the frequency of hypos has lessened to around one per fortnight.

My son ***** is 16 years old and was diagnosed when he was 12. ***** has managed his diabetes very well and has consistently had good blood sugar levels. However, he still experienced one or two hypos per week prior to going onto the pump. ***** had to inject himself at school, which he had to do under supervision, requiring staff to be specifically assigned for the task. It also lead to interrupted and disjointed learning outcomes.

We live on a farm two hours east of Adelaide. The children have quite extensive bus trips to get to their school in *****. Hypos did occur during bus trips and put added stress on the bus driver, school and other children on the bus. The pumps have even made a huge difference in the stress levels of the bus drivers!

Both ***** and ***** have been able to manage working with the pumps quite well and this has lead to less stress (physical & emotional), easier management of their diabetes at school and during sport. I have no hesitation in saying that the pumps have made living with diabetes almost bearable.

We were advised that having children on pumps would not mean less work and this is certainly the case. However, the "work" needed to be done, results in our children being healthier, far less stressed and so much more at ease with having diabetes.

We have another son, ****, who does not have diabetes and I have noticed that he is now less concerned about his siblings having diabetes thanks to them having pumps. Unfortunately, **** was with ***** when she suffered severe hypos and it caused him quite considerable emotional turmoil.

As a family, we have noticed with proper planning that we are able to go about our day to day activities with less strain emotionally. We can go out for the day or even out to check sheep, without having to think about where and when injections would be given or in fact, how we would transport needles and insulin.

We have been able to establish consistent routines in the children's diabetic management as a direct result of them being on pumps.

As mentioned previously, we live 2 hours out of Adelaide and accessing medical support is obviously quite limited. However, our children's pumps are equipped with wifi technology and information can be uploaded so that our Endocrine Team at the Women's & Children's Hospital in Adelaide, can access up to the minute information about our children's blood levels, and other management information. They can "see" what's going on! Our Endocrine team is equipped to give the best advice with regard to adjustments to the pumps as well as general diabetic management over the phone if needed.

We wish to acknowledge the incredible generosity of Medtronic Australasia Pty Ltd who waived the balance of the cost of the pumps.

In closing, our lives have been forever changed because of Type 1 Diabetes, however, I wish to quote Medtronic's motto "Live More, Worry Less" for this sums up living with diabetes for the ***** Family.

Thank you.
