



ELSEVIER

Work 9 (1997) 95

W O R K
A Journal of Prevention,
Assessment & Rehabilitation

Guest Editors' note

Diabetes mellitus is the most common endocrinological disorder in the world. It is the United States' leading cause of adventitious blindness, end-stage renal disease, and amputation of the feet and legs. It is estimated that as many as 16 million Americans, some 6% of the populace, are affected by this intrusive illness.

The majority of people with diabetes mellitus develop the disease during adulthood and because of this, career considerations are central to the overall understanding of the psychosocial impact of the illness. Work consumes more of our waking hours than any other adult activity, and what we do in that role, in large measure, determines who we are. Consider, then, the effect that a chronic, often progressive disease such as diabetes mellitus can exact on a person's identity. Symptom-related functional limitations often impair the person's ability to seek, secure and maintain employment, and the rigorous self-care regimen that the illness necessitates can be a full-time job.

To maximize their prospects for career success as they cope with a wide range of symptoms, people with diabetes need responsive allied health interventions that bridge the gap between medi-

cal and vocational rehabilitation services. The purpose of this special issue is to present current information concerning: (1) the etiologies, incidence, and prevalence of diabetes mellitus; (2) psychosocial implications of the illness; (3) early-intervention approaches to vocational assessment; (4) relevant employment law; and (5) self-care and stress management strategies in the workplace. We conclude the edition with policy, programming, and research recommendations that *Work* readers can use to enhance the employability of their clients and patients who have diabetes.

We would like to thank Dr. Karen Jacobs of Boston University, Managing Editor of *Work*, for the opportunity to undertake this project. Special thanks go to Ms. Dorothy Becker, Dr. Thomas Domer, Dr. Janice Dorman, Ms. Edwina Harris, Ms. Candace Holman, Dr. Ronald LaPorte, Dr. Judith Lave, Dr. Brian McMahan, Ms. Nicole Schoenfeld, Dr. Bonnie Sanders Polin and Dr. Thomas Songer for sharing their expertise with us and *Work's* subscribers in this forum.

Phillip D. Rumrill
James A. Mullins