I have the honor and responsibility of coordinating with the collaboration of other several well-known colleagues, including Kamil Salamah (Saudi Arabia), Larry Distiller (South Africa) and Ramon Gomis (Spain) for the Stream, Science of diabetes complications, scheduled for the IDF Congress at Abu Dhabi in December of this year.

The great prevalence and increasing incidence of micro and macrovascular diabetic complications are likely to be initially connected with poor access to early diabetes diagnosis and treatment but also to the identification and control of an individual’s pre-diabetic status. Another factor is the coinciding poor access to training available to healthcare teams on the clinical management of diabetes as well as self-management education for people with diabetes. Combined with the shortage of medicines and supplies, the result has obvious consequences: poor adherence, medical inertia and preventable, yet poor outcomes. Unfortunately, there’s a third access issue: adequate care for diabetes prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of chronic complications which are lacking in several areas of the world.

These issues above are why poor access has such a formidable place in a program dedicated to diabetic complications. Examples of Stream symposia include: “Forgotten complications of diabetes” with Richard Donnelly (UK) and Lewis Winning (UK); “Gestational diabetes and micro and macro vascular impact” with Maria Christina Faingold (Argentina) and Maria Ines Schmidt (Brazil); and “Diabetic nephropathy-From the beginning” with Alicia Ester Elbert (Argentina), Fernando Lanas (Chile) and Alexander Miras (UK). Mark Cooper (Australia) will deliver the IDF Award Lecture, “Pathogenesis of micro and macrovascular complications: are there common pathways for both?”

Presentations will be delivered by our outstanding faculty through symposia, case studies, meet the expert sessions and debates. This format assures not only the reception of new and important knowledge in these areas, but also a tremendous possibility of exchanging ideas and experiences among the delegates from all over the world and lecturers coming from different regions of the IDF.

It must also be must emphasized that issues concerning the diabetic foot—a topic where poor access has enormous importance—have been developed in a specific Stream with the leadership of Lawrence Harkless (USA).

I am convinced that the Science of diabetes complications Stream will give healthcare providers and people with diabetes new tools for diabetes management, and the 2017 IDF Congress will confirm the success of previous ones.

Isaac Sinay is an advisor at the diabetes unit at the Cardiovascular Institute of Buenos Aires in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Stream Lead, Science of diabetic complications for IDF 2017 Congress in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
Our world is confronted by many disasters today and we are witness to many of them with the help of news and digital media. There are natural disasters like hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, famine and pandemics such as H1N1; there are also political disasters like war & terrorism. Living with diabetes is a huge burden with many challenges even in normal circumstances, however it becomes more difficult during a period of natural disaster or war and unfortunately for many, it can be impossible to get adequate care and medicines during this time.

Previous worldwide natural disasters have taught us that people who live with diabetes face many difficulties getting essential medicines and supplies, such as insulin, blood glucose test strips, adequate nutrition, physical activity and addressing other comorbidities such as hypertension and dyslipidemia. Yet there is still little data to substantiate the urgent need for a protocol or plans to assist people with diabetes in disaster. For humanitarian workers and healthcare providers filling the gaps during disaster in developing countries, the greatest obstacles are lack of pre-disaster plans and poor local resources and thus, rebuilding and providing sustainable care can take years. The situation is even more dramatic and dangerous for individuals with diabetes living in conflict zones such as Syria.

For the first time, this year’s IDF 2017 Congress in Abu Dhabi, UAE, has dedicated a special Stream program entitled “Diabetes and disasters” where experts including medical professionals, public health specialists and relief specialists will present and share experiences on the consequences of disasters for people living with diabetes, as well as discuss plans and guidelines to assist people with diabetes during disaster. The Stream program will offer panel discussions and testimony sessions. Examples of the program include the following symposia:

- Miyako Kishimoto, Chief of the Department of Diabetes and Metabolic Medicine, National Center for Global Health and Medicine in Tokyo, Japan will discuss the Great East Japan Earthquake (2011) on experiences and suggestions for survivors with diabetes.

- Tayseer Sabbagh, Deputy Chief Field Health Program, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) will discuss provisions for non-communicable disease care to Palestinian refugees during emergencies in Syria.

- Krystel Moussally, Epidemiologist for the MENA region at Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) will discuss caring for diabetes in a crisis context in the Levant.

Roundtable consultations co-chaired by Neil Donelan (Insulin for Life Australia) and Dr. Sidartawan Soegondo (Jakarta, Indonesia) will include expert speakers from UNRWA, WHO, IDF and MSF.

The “Diabetes and disasters” Stream program is an urgent platform where needed attention and guidance in preparing for disaster in consideration of people with diabetes and responding to disaster with appropriate measures will save many lives.

Nizar Albache is Co-chair of the IDF Diabetes and Disasters Committee and Chairman of the IDF-MENA region.

The global diabetes community will unite at the IDF 2017 Congress in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on 4-8 December 2017. The event will include more than 200 speakers, both world-renowned and newcomers, 230 national diabetes associations from 170 countries and high level participation from the Health Authority Abu Dhabi (HAAD) and other health organisations. To register or for more information, please visit www.idf.org/congress.