

Challenging Access, Celebrating the Discovery of Insulin after a Hundred Years



Our continued commitment to open access through the support of the AFES country societies has been affirmed by the renewal of our listing in the Directory of Open Access Journals. Beyond our policy of not requiring fees for article processing, subscription, or download, the Editorial Board affirms key strategies to further improve access to the Journal in the ASEAN.

We firmly believe that science should not be hindered by language. For 2022 and beyond, JAFES plans to organize workshops for ASEAN country societies on scholarly writing and publishing in the English language, to address possible language barriers and improve chances of publication. Through this initiative, data from the ASEAN region can find a greater audience and may even be translated to policies and programs that can improve health outcomes in Southeast Asia.

The team is actively promoting its content through its Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. Social media platforms are powerful tools and have definitely changed how information is disseminated and shared. We owe it to our authors, readers, and the general public, to address misinformation by delivering correct scientific evidence. Visual abstracts, which we have innovated in 2019 as a way of distilling key findings into graphic, easily understood and shareable formats, also intend to enhance access. We aim to hold workshops for AFES country societies on the creation of visual abstracts, too, to include versions in their own language.

Through the past decade, the JAFES has featured various topics on diabetes: clinical practice guidelines, physiological and demographic characteristics, nutrition, physical activity and medications. In addition to clinical studies, we are coming up with a special molecular and cellular endocrinology issue for May 2022 to cater to regional studies focused on cellular, molecular, genetic, and epigenetic aspects of endocrine research. By making these available for all without paywalls, JAFES hopes to catalyze more opportunities for regional research collaboration, to facilitate scientific discovery through knowledge building upon knowledge.

The year 2021 ushered in sentimental reminiscences of the time Frederick Banting and Charles Best, James Collip and John MacLeod discovered insulin in Toronto, a hundred years ago, to treat people with diabetes. We remember then 14-year-old Leonard Thompson who was transformed from cachexia to the pink of health with the injection of this life-saving hormone. Along with the international community, JAFES celebrates this momentous scientific milestone that led to better health outcomes for those with diabetes.



Figure 1. Sir Frederick Banting (right) and Dr. Charles Best. In the photo is one of the dogs used in their scientific experiments.¹

As mentioned by Banting in his Nobel Prize lecture, “insulin was not a cure for diabetes; it is a treatment.” A hundred years later, its cure is still elusive. Despite amazing discoveries in our understanding of pathophysiology, enhanced glucose monitoring devices, and insulin-delivery systems, the worldwide epidemic of diabetes continues to prevail.

Through 30 years of clinical practice, I have had many patient interactions, many of whom have led to more than acquaintances, with shared light moments of friendships. Sadly, I continue to see patients in government hospitals who continue to struggle with health care costs for diabetes and its complications, and while the insulin discoverers refused to profit from the discovery in 1921, many today still cannot afford basic insulin. Certainly, greater work needs to be done to overcome the many barriers to access to this century-old scientific breakthrough.

Research information or patient treatment: access is a continuing challenge.

Elizabeth Paz-Pacheco
Editor-in-Chief

Reference

1. Sir Frederick Banting and Dr. Charles Best. Library and Archives of Canada. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Banting_and_Best.jpg#filehistory. Accessed on November 14, 2021.

<https://doi.org/10.15605/jafes.036.02.01>