

## **mDiabetes programme: Mobile technologies are catalysts for development in Senegal**

French global telecommunications equipment company Alcatel-Lucent is supporting the Senegalese government, represented by the Minister of Health and Social Action, the Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, and local partners by participating in the mDiabetes programme launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) as part of the 'Be Healthy, Be Mobile' initiative.

The mDiabetes project in Senegal is one of the larger mHealth projects Alcatel-Lucent is involved in. It aims at combating diabetes with an ambitious and innovative campaign based on mobile technology, designed to improve prevention by raising awareness among diabetic patients as well as training health professionals. SMS messages as well as applications will be used as tools in the campaign.

'Senegal is ready for this mDiabetes project which is in a way a natural extension of the eDiabetes programme developed by Université Numérique Francophone Mondiale (UNFM). Since 2009, it has helped to establish strong ties of cooperation between France and Senegal around diabetes and new technologies,' said Dr Kleinebreil, Vice-President of the UNFM.

This project is a multiple partnership involving many major stakeholders such as the Senegalese government (Ministry of Health and Ministry of Communication), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), WHO, Senegalese Association for the Assistance and Support of Diabetes Patients (ASSAD), the African branch of the International Diabetes Federation, the NGO UNFM, the Marc Sankalé Diabetes Centre, Alcatel-Lucent, Sonatel/Orange, BUPA (global international health insurance and services company), and Sanofi.

The Minister of Health and Social Action of Senegal, Dr. Awa Marie Coll Seck, announced during this ceremony that, 'Mobile phones offer potential that can be used for driving messages that promote health. Other mHealth projects around the globe have proven the effectiveness of using cell phones for messages about health'.

## **Diabetes cure? Stem cell breakthrough could spell end to daily insulin injections**

A breakthrough in type-1 diabetes may result from a study showing that it is possible to make vast quantities of insulin-producing cells for patient transplants.

Scientists have for the first time managed to make hundreds of millions of mature human pancreatic cells to treat diabetic mice successfully over long periods of time. The researchers believe that human clinical trials could begin within a few years with long-term, subcutaneous implants that could make daily insulin injections redundant.

Scientists at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, who carried out the study, said that it should be possible to produce 'scalable' quantities of beta pancreatic cells from stem cells in industrial-sized bioreactors and then transplant them into a patient within an implant to protect them from immune attack.

'A scientific breakthrough is to make functional cells that cure a diabetic mouse, but a major medical breakthrough is

to be able to manufacture at large enough scale the functional cells to treat all diabetics. This research is therefore a scientific and potentially a major medical breakthrough,' said Chris Mason, professor of regenerative medicine at University College London.

## **The world gets behind World Diabetes Day**



The International Diabetes Federation (IDF), along with other member associations, will be holding different events across the world to celebrate the World Diabetes Day (WDD) campaign on 14th November.

WDD is a campaign that features a new theme chosen by the IDF each year to address issues facing the global diabetes community.

WDD is celebrated by the over 200 member associations of the IDF in more than 160 countries and territories, all member states of the United Nations, as well as by other associations and organisations, companies, healthcare professionals, and people living with diabetes, and their families.

Activities and events to celebrate the campaign include free diabetes screenings, walking, running and cycling events, and different events for children to get involved and learn.

## **Merck kicks off its second year fight against diabetes by adopting e-learning solutions to build healthcare capacity in Africa**

Merck, the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company has started its second year of its five year project to provide European Accredited Clinical Diabetes Management course for medical and pharmacy students in African Universities by introducing e-Learning.

The German pharmaceutical and chemical giant is implementing a well structured and coherent Corporate Social Responsibility strategy that features a medical education Africa tour to improve diabetes healthcare in Africa.

At the beginning of September 2014, Merck Capacity Advancement Programme (CAP) kicked off its second year of the Clinical Diabetes Management Programme to medical and pharmacy students in University of Nairobi. Merck will provide the same course to medical students of Makerere University, Uganda and University of Namibia.

By the end of September 2014, Merck CAP provided the same course addressing chronic diseases management focusing on diabetes and hypertension. The course will be offered in Portuguese by international and local professors to medical students at University Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique and Katyavala Bwila University, Angola.

Dr Stefan Oschmann, Merck Pharma CEO emphasised; 'Merck is supporting e-Health which can definitely contribute to bringing healthcare to unserved or underserved populations; increasing the effectiveness and reducing the costs of healthcare delivery; improving the effectiveness of public health programmes and research; preventing illness and managing and treating chronic diseases.'