

NCD PATIENT ADVOCACY IN BRAZIL

KNOWLEDGE IS TREATMENT

SUBMITTED BY ABT ASSOCIATES

WHEN RONALDO JOSE PINEDA WIESELBERG WAS TWO, he told his mother he wanted to be a doctor. A math teacher, she went back to correcting papers, and he returned to his cars and jigsaw puzzles. Two weeks later, he was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. Instead of an obstacle, the disease just cemented his decision. Now 24, the Brazilian native is a medical school grad, an intern at Holy House of Mercy in Sao Paulo, and an aspiring endocrinologist.

But no one knows better than he that he is carrying a death sentence. “Type 1 is bad luck because your body is attacking yourself,” he says. “There is no known cause and no way to prevent it.” The danger came perilously close to home when the phone rang on Easter in 2011. A friend was calling with terrifying news: another friend had died of acute complications from diabetes. Wieselberg knew that the death could have been prevented with the right information and treatment. He went to the funeral and sat next to his terrified mother. She hugged him and pleaded that he take care of himself. At that moment, he realized his mission: to fight for people with diabetes.

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-Ronaldo Jose Pineda Wieselberg

He started to look for information, prowling the National Institutes of Health website and other medical links. To his dismay, the information was tailored to health care professionals, not to patients. From then on, he engaged with every project he could to help provide diabetes training for youth to try to contain the diabetes and obesity epidemics.

Wieselberg now is one of the leading young advocates for diabetes patients and is the International Diabetes Federation Regional Chair-elect for South and Central America. Along with this volunteer work and his hospital job, he does freelance work for Medical Joy Works, an Indian company that creates questions and clinical cases for mobile apps - a mobile game for doctors. His work on the app is tied to a belief that is fundamental to his life's work: “Nobody should die of diabetes for lack of information,” he declares. “Information is the treatment.”

