

HEALTHIER PREGNANCIES FOR MOTHER AND CHILD

An innovative partnership created a new approach to improving the awareness, diagnosis and care of gestational diabetes.



Many people have heard of type 1 and type 2 diabetes – but few are aware that there is another kind of diabetes that can develop during pregnancy called gestational diabetes. In recent years, the Abbott Fund has supported an innovative partnership to develop a new approach to care for patients with gestational diabetes in India – with the longer-term goal of creating healthier futures for mothers and babies worldwide.

Gestational diabetes (also called gestational diabetes mellitus, or GDM) is a significant problem around the world. It affects up to 15 percent of pregnant women, but they may not know it. If not managed correctly, gestational diabetes can lead to type 2 diabetes, as well as other health complications for both mother and child.

To tackle the problem of gestational diabetes, a unique partnership between the International Diabetes Federation, the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF) and the Abbott Fund created a program called WINGS, which stands for Women in India with GDM Strategy. With more than \$2 million in support from the Abbott Fund, the WINGS partners developed a new [GDM Model of Care](#) to improve the awareness, diagnosis and management of gestational diabetes.

Piloted in Tamil Nadu, India, the program provided community based education and support for more than 2,100 women with GDM. More than 60 physicians were trained on the model of care, and more than 250 community health workers were involved in the outreach programme to raise awareness of GDM. The project focused on the importance of close follow-up and interaction between healthcare workers and patients.

[Initial results](#) were promising – women with GDM had improved pregnancy outcomes similar to women without GDM. In addition, 96 percent of women participating in the program returned for follow-up after delivery (compared to typical follow-up rates of 10-20 percent) – which creates an opportunity to prevent the development of type 2 diabetes.

Additional results from the program were shared at the World Diabetes Congress in Vancouver, with the longer-term goal of introducing the program in other countries around the world.

"Gestational diabetes is a hidden epidemic. It affects more than 5 million women in India alone, but they may not know it – which leads to increased risks for themselves and their babies," said Katherine Pickus, vice president, the Abbott Fund. "The WINGS program provides mothers with the information and support they need to take charge of their own health, and the health of their children – with the goal of creating healthier futures for families across India and around the world."