Blood sugar levels influence behaviors

DEAR ABBY: I was in shock when I read the letter from Dr. Barrett, the president-elect of the American Diabetes Association. He was commenting on the letter from "Wants a Life in Virginia," who said her husband's diabetes has led to irrational, irresponsible and even violent behavior. Writing to "set the record straight," Dr. Barrett denied that diabetes could be the cause. In no



way was the record set straight by his letter.

The American Diabetes Association notes irritability and anxiousness in its list of symptoms, but doctors, nurses and those who work in nursing facilities can tell you of combative behavior for no reason and resisting treatment. To deny this truth is a disservice to those who need immediate attention.

Dr. Barrett made it harder for us all who deal with this disease and its challenges — and there are many. – BARBARA L. GIFFEN, VER-MONT CHAPTER SUGARBUGS DEAR BARBARA: I have a stack

of testimonials 2 inches thick from people like yourself, also "in the trenches," vouching that blood sugar levels can and do affect a person's personality. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: When my blood sugar gets very high (350-plus) I become verbally abusive and develop a hair-trigger temper. As soon as the insulin kicks in, I return to my normal self. Many of my friends who are also diabetic tell me they react the same way. You and the good doctor

should refrain from blanket statements. — W.H.S., DANA, N.C.

DEARW.: I agree. I have also been told that when a person's blood sugar gets LOW, he or she can become short-tempered. That is one reason why being a food server sometimes requires the skills of a diplomat. Read

DEAR ABBY: I have been an insulin-dependent diabetic for 34 years. To speak to Dr. Barrett's apparent agenda, no, I have never been in a brawl, never "gone nuts" in public. But my wife can tell a few stories. The spouses, partners and relatives of diabetics are unsung heroes. I have awakened her in the night having sei-

zures. I have come to my senses af- eral public, the possibility of any ter consuming sufficient sugar to find my wife weeping and refusing to tell me what I said, so I know it wasn't gibberish I was ranting, but something that could easily be characterized (to quote Dr. Barrett) as "irresponsible, irrational, and even violent behavior." It may not be my fault, but it remains my responsibility.

The agenda of the ADA, and most knowledgeable health-care professionals, is to emphasize to diabetics that they can be healthy, productive and happy (all true). What they no longer add to that list is "live a normal life." In an effort to overcome fears and misconceptions by the gen-

other situation is downplayed to the rest of the world.

I hope you will acknowledge that regardless of the great challenges faced by diabetics, those who love them are also confronted by trials. -ROBERT V., SYRACUSE, N.Y.,

DEAR ROBERT: Thank you very much for your honest letter. I contacted the American Diabetes Association after I received the avalanche of mail from readers who disagreed with Dr. Barrett. He still maintains that "based on the facts presented in the original letter, he would again state that diabetes is not an explanation for her husband's behavior."

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