**Increasing community involvement in diabetes research and health service improvement: A rapid review of barriers and enablers faced by communities with type 2 diabetes**

**Background**

Community involvement (CI) in research refers to research carried out ‘with’ or ‘by’ members of the community rather than ‘to’ or ‘for’ them. The benefits of CI in diabetes research and health service improvements are increasingly recognised, but greater representation of people with type 2 diabetes (T2D) in CI activities is needed. This rapid review, conducted by a multidisciplinary team with T2D lived experience members, aimed to identify barriers and enablers to CI in research and health services improvement for people with T2D.

**Methods**

Five scholarly databases were searched (July 2024; updated May 2025) for English-language articles (primary and secondary studies) discussing barriers or enablers for T2D CI in research or health services improvement projects. Screening was undertaken independently by pairs of reviewers. Study characteristics and findings were extracted, and data were analysed using an inductive qualitative approach. Lived experience members were involved throughout and provided independent review and interpretation of results.

**Results**

Of the 4,216 articles identified, 39 were included (89% primary, 11% secondary). Primary studies involved qualitative approaches with diverse groups including people with T2D, families/carers, diabetes service providers and health professionals. Studies were conducted in six high income countries (USA 59%); 50% involved culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Across articles, enablers of T2D CI included building and promoting professional-community partnerships, facilitating genuine contribution and collaboration through creating safe and inclusive environments, sharing ownership of projects and providing relevant support and training to community members. Barriers included negative past experiences of research leading to community distrust and social and cultural practices inhibiting public disclosure of diabetes conditions.

**Discussion**

Review findings can inform practical strategies to increase T2D CI in research and health service improvement initiatives, including building respectful relationships with communities that are supportive and offer meaningful opportunities to contribute with awareness of social and cultural considerations.