Egyptian Health Tech Startup Otida Raises $340,000 to Alleviate the Pains of Diabetes

With a goal to improve the lives of 5,000 patients this year, Otida has a tech solution to help alleviate the pains of patients struggling with diabetes in Egypt and the Middle East.

Cairo, March 23 – Egyptian health-tech startup Otida raised $340,000 in a pre-seed round led by Lofty Inc., a Texas-based VC, with the participation of Flat6Labs Cairo, Afropreneurs, Jedar Capital, OQAL Angel Investors, UI Investments and some angel investors.

Otida is an app that acts as a nutritionist, a fitness coach and physician, among other roles, for patients with diabetes who struggle while navigating through their day-to-day lives. This round will help the team productize Otida's operations and expand distribution to reach more patients.

Ahmed Tawfic, founder and CEO of Otida: "Otida's business model revolves around the needs of patients with diabetes. We believe that with the level of technology we are surrounded by today, it's unacceptable to have patients with diabetes still struggling to find the right treatment program that fits each individual condition."

Considering its unprecedented magnitude, diabetes has been recently declared as a global pandemic. In fact, more than one in every ten people around the world is currently living with diabetes; 90% of whom have type 2, which is often milder than type 1 but can also lead to deadly health issues such as heart diseases and strokes. Moreover, it is estimated that every 30 seconds a lower limb or part of a lower limb is lost somewhere in the world as a consequence of diabetes. Ranked 9th in diabetic population, Egypt is plagued with a fast-growing health problem with a significant impact on morbidity, mortality, and health care resources. Kuwait is ranked 3rd with almost a 25% prevalence rate among adults.

The current care model for diabetes is ineffective, reactive to symptoms, lacks personalizations, depends solely on medications and adds the whole responsibility on doctors alone. This is an outdated approach that Otida aims to defy, because as it stands, the care model for diabetes is considered incompetent due to the poor quality of data gathered. The blood tests taken only when the patient presents their case to a new physician are not representative enough to build effective treatment programs. That happens because the health care system doesn't take into account the inconsistencies of each patient's body; for example, their blood levels could be performing abnormally on the date the test was taken for any given reason.

Otida's solution

Otida collects a minimum of 100 data points, per patient, per day, to tailor the best personalized care model for each user on the app. Otida's solution is a care model that is rooted in technology, it adopts the most up-to-date guidelines to present the most effective care model. Once signed up for Otida, patients receive wearables to read blood sugar levels every 15 minutes and report back to the cloud without having to have the patients prick their fingers with an archaic blood sugar monitor. That is in addition to the data collected from the patients, such as food consumed, the medication prescribed, and periodical lab tests. That way, and to return with the best fitting care model, the app learns a lot about the patient's nutrition, glycemic responses to different food and medications, their lifestyle and behavior.

Each patient gets assigned a coach who is available around the clock. Otida also educates its patients about their individual conditions and how they can measure their insulin and blood levels and how they can use that data to improve their lifestyles.

Otida watched as this tech solution changed many lives. Thanks to smart technology and sharp data analytics, Otida was able to reverse diabetes for those diagnosed with type 2.

Mona AbdelMoteleb, Medical Director of Otida: "We have patients with type 2 diabetes who were insulin dependent, with Otida's guidance they stopped taking it and stopped depending on medications altogether. We want to be a companion to help diabetic patients live a normal, happy life."

Team Expansion

Today, the Otida team is composed of eight members all working towards one mission: to make the life of each user with diabetes easier. To expand Otida's footprint to a milestone of 5,000 patients this year, the company's looking to hire devoted, experienced calibers to help make Otida's mission a reality.

Otida's team structure is divided as follows: a technology department that's responsible for both development and product management; a nutrition department of nutritionists and dieticians studying each patient's response to food and placing right plans that work with each correspondingly; a medical department armed with endocrinologists and other relevant specialties; customer support department with agents answering to the patients' questions and requests; data analytics department to make use of the data collected within the app to present the users with a healthy, efficient solution.

Founded originally as instadiet, the app focused its methodology on the glycemic responses of its users. The app would measure how quickly each food item causes their users' blood sugar levels to rise and put together a diet plan accordingly. Due to this data-driven approach tailored for each individual, the app attracted a lot of users diagnosed with diabetes who found their methodology perfect for their day-to-day lives. The demand the app collected got the founders to rethink their strategy to be even more efficient to their diabetic user base and the 9 million people with diabetes in Egypt and 73 million in the whole region.

About the Founders

Ahmed Tawfic is the founder and CEO of Otida (previously known as Instadiet) and holds a Computer Science degree from the American University in Cairo. He has spent more than 15 years between technical engineering and product management for big multinationals. Tawfic also holds a Master of Business Administration at the University of Chicago where he built strong connections that have resonated in his journey as an entrepreneur.

Ayman Mostafa is Otida's co-founder and COO. He's an entrepreneur with seven years of software engineering under his belt. Moreover, Mostafa has over 12 years of experience in business development and digital marketing. Before joining Otida, he founded a tech startup that helps citizens navigate through bureaucratic errands at the tap of a button.

They both met in AUC Venture Labs and decided to take Otida to the next level together.

Supplementary Diabetes Statistics

Diabetes in Egypt

Diabetes is a fast-growing health problem in Egypt with a significant impact on morbidity, mortality, and health care resources. Currently, the prevalence of type 2 diabetes (T2D) in Egypt is around **15.6%** of all adults aged 20 to 79.

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) has identified Egypt as the **ninth** leading country in the world for the number of patients with T2D. The prevalence of T2D in Egypt has almost **tripled over the last 2 decades**. This sharp rise could be attributed to either an increased pattern of the traditional risk factors for T2D such as obesity and physical inactivity and change in eating pattern or other risk factors unique to Egypt.

Source: [PubMed](#)

Diabetes in Saudi Arabia

The World Health Organization has ranked Saudi Arabia as having the second highest rate of diabetes in the Middle East (7th highest in the world) with an estimated population of **7 million** living with diabetes and more than **3 million** with pre-diabetes. This presents a pressing public health problem.

Over the last two decades, the Saudi population saw an increase in the expenses in healthcare and treatment of diabetes by more than 500%. In 2014, the health care budget was 180 billion (Saudi Riyal) of which 17 billion was spent on all Saudis, with an approximate **25 billion** on the entire Saudi diabetic population. This implies that the direct expense of diabetes is costing Saudi Arabia around **13.9%** of the total health expenditure.

Source: [PubMed](#)

Diabetes in MENA

- **55 million** adults (20-79) are living with diabetes in the IDF MENA Region in 2019. This figure is estimated to increase to **108 million** by 2045.
- The prevalence of diabetes in the IDF MENA Region is **12.8%**.
- 45% of people living with diabetes in the IDF MENA Region are **undiagnosed**.
- Diabetes is expected to cause **418,900** deaths in the IDF MENA Region in 2019.

- 1 in 9 live births in the IDF MENA Region are affected by hyperglycemia in pregnancy.
- **USD 25 billion** was spent on healthcare for people with diabetes in 2019.

Source: [The International Diabetes Federation](#)