

(1) Tell me about your background.

Well, my name is Tas Bokhari. I born in 1938 in Soniput in India, and my parents were a landowner. In 1947 we migrate from India to Pakistan, and in this transaction, most of my family died; only few people survived. We settled down in Gujrat, which is in Punjab in Pakistan, and I did my Matric from Mission High School, Gujrat, then I moved to the Zamindara College. I did my graduation from there, and then I came to this country and got admission in advanced technology college.

You say that your parents were landowners. Did that survive the move to Pakistan?

Yes, they survived to move to the Pakistan, and what land we have in India, we got in return in Pakistan.

And did either of your parents do any other paid work?

My father was in the army, and he retired. And after that, he hasn't done anything.

Was that the Pakistan army?

British army, not Pakistan army, and... But most of my family, you know, the brother, my brother-in-law, they're all in army. My nephew became the General in the Pakistan army. There are brigadier, colonel - you name it and you'll find it in my family.

And how did so many members of your family die in the move to Pakistan?

Well, if you heard, you know, that when they're migrating from India to Pakistan and Pakistan to India, they were killing, you know, the hundreds and thousands of people. My grandparents were travelling in a train which stopped near Amritsa and killed everyone, and they were in this train.

(2) From other side, nobody survived except my mother and my auntie. My auntie live in Bombay, that's how she survived, and otherwise, every person she lost: nephew, nieces, brother, uncle; you name it, about fifty, sixty people.

You were around ten years old then, or a little under ten. What are your memories?

I was about nine years old at that time, but I wasn't... I don't know what's happening and why they're fighting, why they're killing each other. Sometime I terrified and sometime I just cry, because that's the age, you know, that you don't know why these people are killing. They were friend - we used to live together, we used to live in the same street, and suddenly they turn against us. So, it's very complicated thing, you know, I don't know how the people mood change.

What was it like for you as a child settling in Pakistan?

Well, in the beginning, you know, it was very difficult because there's a language problem. When we were in India, we used to speak Urdu. When I moved to Punjab, they speak Punjabi. Sometime I had a very hell of a problem to understand what they are talking, and when I speak Urdu they used to laugh, because it's a different language. But sooner or later I pick up the language, and I start, you know, the converse in their own language, and then everything is all right.

And you mentioned you went to a Mission school. Why was that, since you came from a Muslim family?

Well, one thing is, the Mission school standard at that time, you know, was really good, and second thing is, that school was quite near to my house, say about two hundred yards away, so it was a convenient. So, we decide to go to the Mission school. We are not a so religious family that because it's a Christian school we won't go to the Christian school, we want to go to Muslim school. No, it's the question. I mean, we want to learn and we learn good from the Mission school, and I have no regret at all.

What was your education like?

I mean, it was all right. I mean, I pass, you know, in the second division - not very bright, because I was expecting to be a first division to get admission in a medical college. But since I couldn't get admission in a medical college, so I was content to second division,

(3) and I went to Zamindara College and did, you know, the BA in Economics and Urdu.

And what was your family life like?

Well, my family was quite a happy family. We were five brother and three sister, then nephew, and we had a huge house. I think it was the biggest house in Gujrat - we had about twenty two rooms in it, and it was fun when all the families get together on Eid and Bakra Eid days or any celebration. We used to love it.

Was there any diabetes in your family?

Yes. My father had a diabetes, my elder brother had a diabetes, and the third brother - you know, he's two years older than me - he had a diabetes, and funnily enough, all three died with a heart attack, just due to diabetes. So, I'm very careful, watching their example. Whatever they did, I'm not doing!

So what did they do?

Well, they didn't care about, you know, the food and diet. They can eat whatever they like. They used to eat sweet things - I don't touch sweet thing, they never did any exercise - I do quite a lot of exercise. I used to play badminton, I used to play cricket, so that's how, you know, I try to keep myself fit.

Can you describe, in some detail, what your family's diet was like in Pakistan in the 1940s and '50s?

Well, main diet is, you know, the curry with rice and bread. And when my mother and the cook used to cook, you know, the curry, he make sure that he put a lot of fat in it. And now, if my wife see that fat, you know, in a curry or gravy, she had a heart attack. She hardly put any, you know, the fat and grease in the food. But over there, till you had quite a big layer of fat, you think the food is not nice. So, I make sure, you know, that... they never eat, you know, the vegetable, raw vegetable, salad or anything, they just pure, you know, the meat.

So, there was no salad in your childhood diet?

If there was any, I didn't like it. But since I came to this country, I start eating the salad, and I enjoy the salad now.

Did you have fresh fruit as a child?

Yes, the fruit is abundant. Fruit is that much that you can buy it,

- (4) and sometime, you know, the pick your own fruit free of charge if you go out of the city. So, the fruit, no problem. And this is the thing. I think people in the village, they had the better health life and the better living, because they got the excess of vegetable and the free fruit.

You mentioned that you had a lot of sweets. What were the sweets like in your childhood?

Well, the sweets, you know, they're like, you know, the meat-sweet: Gulab Jaman, which is just like a treacle sponge, Burfi, which is made up of, you know, the milk and sugar again. And everything is, you know - over there - is wrong. I think they eat too much of the sugar and not much exercise.

Can you give me some memories of your father's and brothers' diabetes? Were they on insulin or tablets, what kind of medical treatment did they receive?

Well, at that time, you know, the medical science wasn't so advance, so insulin is out of the question. They were on a diet or the tablets, but I think tablets and diet wasn't working at all. If you have a rich food in front of you, you can't resist - the smell of the food and everything - so they never care what happen. And once they had heart attack, then they realised that everything that they did in their life, it was wrong.

Did you hear of anyone having insulin in Pakistan in the late 1940s, 1950s?

I don't remember. The first time I find actually insulin in this country when I had diabetes. And the doctor test my blood, and he said "you are about eighteen or nineteen", and he said "if you won't control your diet, I'll put you on the insulin", so I ask him "what insulin?". Then he explained to me, and then I realise that there is something, you know, the insulin. The second thing is, there

are insulin - two type of it: human and the animal. Animal insulin isn't allowed in my religion or in my country, and human insulin, it wasn't invented that time.

Well, we'll come onto your own diagnosis later. But can you tell me then, now, what you did after you left school? You did a degree - what did you do with that?

Well, not a lot. I mean that, you know, degree is no use to me; it was just on the paper. This country doesn't recognise this degree. Only one thing is, on this basis I got the admission - it used to be the College of Advanced Technology, now it's University of Aston.

What year did you come to England?

I came in 1961,

- (5) and that was another big story. When I came here, I had only few pound in my pocket. And I hired a taxi from the airport, and somebody told me, you know, the taxi will take you about three to four pound. And this taxi driver was taking me, you know, all around, circle after circle. When I finish, he ask me about ten pound. In 1961, ten pound was a lot of money. I had a shock. I paid him, and then I stay on hunger strike!

Did you know anyone in this country?

Yes, a friend of mine, Mohamed Ayyub. He came here, you know, the before me, and he used to live in Sparkbrook. And I was going supposed to be staying with him, and that's why, you know, I couldn't find his address and we keep circling in a taxi. So, once we reach over there, then I stay with my friend, and then I find another accommodation and move over there.

And what kind of accommodation did you live in at first?

Well, I just want to sleep over there, so I find a room, bed-sit, in Farm Road next to Mohamed Ayyub room. And I spend about two, three years over there. And I... most of the time I used to spend in University of Aston or British home, British Council. It was some kind of humanity centre for the students, and I used to go there eat, read and do lot of thing, so I used to just come home and sleep and that's it.

What did you do after you left Aston University?

Well, I find a job, first of all in the BSA as a motorcycle inspector, and after that I moved to Rover, and I worked two years in Rover. Then I got a job as a design engineer in Lucas. So, I stayed there at Lucas about eighteen years, and once that Lucas decide to move either Germany, France or North Wales, they ask me "where you want to go?". I said "no, I don't want to go anywhere else, stay in Birmingham". "In that case", they said, "you have to take redundancy", which I take the redundancy. And then, with the help of Mr Ayyub - my friend - and there was another friend, he was a doctor, Dr Hussain, we open a nursing home, and I run this nursing home about twelve years. And eventually I bought

the nursing home from them and I was the sole owner. When I had a heart attack, then I have to sell this nursing home.

- (6) Can you go into some more detail about what happened between leaving Aston University and opening the nursing home, which I think was about 1990?

Well, as I explained to you that I got a job in BSA Motorcycle as a motorcycle inspector. I work about three, four years, from 1964 till 1968, then I moved to the Rover, and I worked three years over there up to 1970. In 1970 I got the job in Lucas Girling as a design engineer, and I left the Lucas Girling in 1985, when they were moving from Birmingham to different places. After that, from 1985 to '90, I was unemployed and I was looking for a job, and I did freelancing on the design engineering. But when I got the opportunity to open a nursing home with the help of friend, then we opened the nursing home in 1990.

And when did you get married?

Well, we get married in 1964. It's funny you can ask, because we had a short of cash. I used to get money from Pakistan for my study, but I haven't got enough money to buy books or anything, so I used to go quite a lot to the Birmingham library to study. And my wife, she was a librarian over there, so that's how we meet. And I got the books and we start talking and that thing, and then eventually, you know, we got married in 1964.

How did your families react?

Well, they react as usual; both side, you know, they react. My parents said, you know, they were angry. They threatened me to stop, you know, my grant if I won't, you know, stop getting married to her. And her parents was worried as well, because it's natural they thought, you know, the - I'm a foreigner. And everyone said "well, this marriage will last about six months - most, one year". Now we've been married forty two years, and we're still going on.

And when did you have children?

My daughter born in 1964 - her name is Shahina Bokhari, and my son, he born in 1966. His name is Tariq Bokhari.

And how did you finance the family?

Well, my wife, you know, left the job when she was expecting the first baby, and she was in a library, and after that she became a pure housewife. And I have to compensate - my earning wasn't enough - so I find a job to sell the newspaper on a Pakistani shop, and that's how we manage.

- (7) Can you talk about your life now, between when your children were small in the 1960s and when your diabetes was diagnosed in 1985?

I used to work for Rover when my children born, and after that I was looking for a better job. And then the opportunity arise - there was a job vacancy in Lucas Girling as a design engineer, which was my line, so I apply for the job and I got

it. So, in 1970 I start working for Lucas Girling. While I was there I had the opportunity to join the sports. And I joined the sports, you know, the cricket, which I was very good, and the badminton evening time to keep myself busy, fit and entertain myself. Sorry. . . While I was in Lucas, I feel that I'm feeling tired and feel thirsty, so I decide to go and see my nurse in Lucas Girling. She test, and she said to me "Mr Bokhari, you've got a diabetes". I said "don't be silly, I'm a fit person". She said "no, you go and see your doctor". I went to see my doctor, and he test my urine and he said "no, there isn't any sugar, you're all right". So, I went back to the nurse; I told her. She said "it's impossible, you've got the diabetes". She wrote a letter to the doctor explaining everything, and then this time, doctor send my blood sample for a test, and it was confirmed that I am a diabetic. So, he put me on tablets for a start. I stay on the tablets till 1985. . . sorry, I diagnosed, you know, in 1985, and change my tablets to insulin in 1999.

- (8) It seems fairly amazing that your GP, at first, told you you hadn't got diabetes. This was a normal NHS surgery?

Yes, it was my private doctor, and he was very good. But funny thing, my - at that stage - my sugar level going up and down; he wasn't testing my blood sugar, he was just testing, you know, through urine. And urine said it's clear, so that's why he said to me, he said "no, you haven't got the diabetes". But the nurse in my Lucas, she was adamant, and she told me "no, you've got the diabetes". So, she wrote a letter to the doctor explaining everything, and then the doctor send me for a blood test. And when the result came and he said "yes, Mr Bokhari, yes, you've got the early stage of diabetes. You better control yourself by dieting". So, he arrange with my wife a diet sheet that I should have, you know, the eat this thing and don't eat that one and this. So, I promise "okay, I will do that", but the promises, promises - promise can be broken, and that's why I wasn't stick to that diet. And eventually my diabetes gone out of control, and as a result, then I have to go back to the insulin.

You said he was your own private doctor? Did you pay him or was he. . . ?

No, it was National Health.

And what kind of diet did you have before your diet was changed? Was it an Asian diet or did your wife cook an English diet?

Well, it was a combined diet - you know, sometime she used to cook Asian food, sometime she cook, you know, the English food. But when she used to cook, you know, the Asian food, then she used to use quite a lot of oil or fat in it, and that's how, you know, we weren't very careful about this thing. Well, since I got diagnosed diabetes, then she take charge, and she was very, very careful not to put lot of fat in it.

Can you remember what the diet was like that the doctor recommended in 1985?

That was very horrible. First of all, I refused to eat like salad, and no cheese, no meat, nothing else, so I thought "well, the life is not worth living", and that's

why I used to do some cheating. I pretend that I'm eating and sticking to the diet,

(9) but as soon as I go out, I'm back to the same routine.

Was the diet really no cheese and no meat?

I mean, I can't explain to you. It was really horrible; there was nothing. I mean, she put me on a Ryvita biscuit, and very slight cheese, very rough, you know, the bread, which I never like it. In the beginning we used to eat, you know, the white bread, thick slice, and suddenly, you know, she start buying wholemeal, so, I mean, it's a different taste, so I didn't like it.

Did you keep to the diet at all?

Sometime while she was there, but as soon as out of sight, I'd just gone back to the same routine. Now, as I said, that I got a friend - if I go to a friend house, whatever they offer me, I just eat it.

But you'd told the nurse at work that you felt you had a very healthy lifestyle?

Yes, I told the nurse I had a very healthy lifestyle, and I'm playing, you know, the cricket and I'm playing badminton almost every day, and I was quite slim, not overweight. And suddenly, you know, that she's telling me that I'm a diabetes, I've got a diabetes, so I don't know how. And I know the result of the diabetes, because I lost my father and two brother, so that was very shock to me, you know, that she's telling me that I've got the diabetes while I'm very careful.

Now, you say that you knew what could happen with diabetes because of your own relatives, and yet you still didn't keep to the diet. Now, this will apply to many people, but can you describe what was going on in your mind at the time?

Well, sometime, you know, the pleasure in your life is to break the rule, and I did. And as soon as I break the rule then I'm sorry for myself, and I said "no, I did the bad thing. I should stick to the diet", then "what shall I do?". To compensate, I missed the meal or anything, which is very bad, you know, according to the dietician - that I should have a proper, you know, the two square meal and not to miss anything. But at that time I was young - I thought, you know, this thing is not going to happen to me; but once this happen, so happen.

What could the doctor or nurse or anyone have done to help you stick to the diet?

No, they can't do anything. It's entirely up to you. If you stick to the diet then you can do it, but if you want to keep, you know, the making a mess and breaking the rules and breaking the diet, you know, the regulation, then the doctor and nurses can't do anything. Nobody can do anything - you have to do it yourself.

(10) Did you tell people that you'd got diabetes?

Well, this is the very funny thing, you know, that you don't want to, you know, advertise to everyone that you've got the diabetes. As a matter of fact, people feel ashamed or shy or something. They never mention that they've got the diabetes. I mean, same thing is with me. I know I got the diabetes, but I won't admit that I got the diabetes. If anybody ask me anything, I just simply say "oh, I'm all right, I'm fine. There's nothing wrong with me. Look, I play cricket, I play badminton". Once, in 1985, when I got the redundancy, then I have plenty of time. And I'm very fond of, you know, the cricket, so I apply for a job in Edgbaston cricket ground, and I got a job as a liaison officer, which was very good. I can meet the people, I can play the cricket, and it was really, you know, my ambition fulfil. In the World Cup, I was, you know, the organising two teams: England and New Zealand. They were playing, and after that, New Zealand accused, you know, the England cheating. They said they are cheating because they are using the heavy roller rather than the light roller. And while they were arguing, suddenly I collapse on the pitch in front of, you know, about thirty five thousand crowd. They took me to the hospital - Priory Hospital. They thought I got the heart attack, but it wasn't a heart attack - it was my sugar level gone haywire. They diagnosed and they advised me that "the tablets is no use. We have to put you on a insulin", and that's how I gone to the insulin. And there is end of my, you know, the cricket career, because they told me strictly that "you need a rest. If you work around then you're going to die". So, I have to give up the cricket and I have to sell the nursing home as well.

We haven't really talked about the nursing home. Can you tell me about that?

Yeah. In 1985 I became redundant. Then, I got a part-time job in Edgbaston cricket ground. I got plenty of time, I was bored, then my friend suggest that "why don't you join the nursing home? We need somebody to run the nursing home. You got plenty of time, you got the experience and you got the education", so I agreed to run the nursing home. In 1990 we take charge of the nursing home, and I was running all right. In 1999 I had a heart attack, as I explained to you before, and then, on the doctor advice, I have to leave the nursing home. I put the nursing home for sale and retire in the year 2000.

So, now, obviously, being taken to hospital like that was a major shock. Did you change your lifestyle after that?

Well, quite a lot. I mean, it's nothing to do with me. Now my wife take charge of me. Every time I'm eating anything, she cook, you know, make sure that there's nothing in it; it's a proper diet. In between meal, I don't eat anything. And because she's retire, I'm retire, we have most of the time together, so I can't do any cheating.

(11) How did you find the change from tablets to insulin?

Well, tablets was all right - I mean, if I stick to them and do the proper, you know, the dieting - but since I go onto the insulin, suddenly I put on lot of weight. And now it's a catch twenty two, that I want to reduce my weight. For a reduce in weight I have to control my diet, eat less or something, but if I eat



less, I get a hypo in a daytime or evening time, which is very frightening. But if I eat, you know, the consecutive meal then I'm not losing my weight. And now I got a pain in my leg and the doctor think it's angina, so they had a operation - first of all angioplasty then angiography. . . angiography or angioplasty - I don't know which one come first. But I'm walking better. But before I start, you know, the insulin, my muscle was so weak then I can hardly walk about ten foot, and if I do walk, you know, I keep falling on the floor. But, I don't know. One thing is that insulin put a lot of weight, and I have no idea how to reduce my weight. At the moment my problem is just to reduce the weight, because all my clothes gone smaller, and I can't afford to buy a new wardrobe.

What do medical staff say when you tell them your problem about losing weight since insulin and having hypos if you eat less?

Well, they are confused as I am, that why this happening. They said either I'm using too much insulin or I'm not eating less, and they keep advising me to do some exercise, but how can I do the exercise if I can't walk? So, this is the question. But they keep saying that even you can walk ten feet or twenty feet, whatever it is, you do some exercise walking. But my wife drag me out so many time - "let's go for a walk", but it's not helping. It's causing more trouble, because half way I'm just stuck and keep sitting down and having a rest, so that's another problem. I get out of breath, I got a pain in my hip, my leg; it's very, very frightening. I don't know. . .

What other complications have you had?

- (12) Well, you name it. I got eye problem - I had a two cataract operation. I had angina, which I had the operation. I had angina in my leg, which I had operation. Now, I'm going to hospital in four or five days' time for a complete check-up - they're going to keep me for five days. Now they think I'm anaemic. I got a. . . the doctor said, you know, that "you got a weak kidney". So, I think I got every disease - you name it.

You mentioned when you had the scare at the cricket match that you went to the Priory Hospital, which is a private hospital. When did you change from National Health medicine to private medicine?

Well, that's another thing. While I was there, I was unconscious in the Priory Hospital, and once I come to my senses, my wife said to me "you want the good news or bad news?". So, I said "all right, give me bad news first", and she said to me that insurance people, you know, they refused to pay. So, I said "what's the good news?", and she said "the good news is that the doctor said that you are getting better, you are on the insulin, and you have to stay in hospital one week". So, I ask her, I said "how much are they - the charges per day?", and when she told me "eight hundred fifty pound per day", I don't know which disease is worst - the eight hundred fifty pound or diabetes! So, I told her, I said "pack your luggage and we are going home". Even the doctor was insist that I must stay, I'm not getting better, but I don't want to stay another day because I can't afford eight hundred fifty pounds a day. After that I sold the insurance, which

is PPP, but they had a clause in it, which I haven't read it, that before you go to hospital you have to ask their permission. And I didn't ask for permission, because they just take me straight over there because I was unconscious. How can I ask for permission? But, second excuse was that "you were ill. You could have gone to any hospital, emergency ward, and they would have admitted it", so they refused to pay. And for three days, I have to pay roughly four thousand pound.

When did you begin subscribing to private medicine?

Oh, I start, you know, the subscribing in

- (13) 1970 when I joined Lucas, and I paid ten years without claiming even a penny. This is the first time, you know, that we were claiming the insurance, and they refused. So, I was so disgusted that I cancelled the insurance, because I was paying roughly, you know, seventy or eighty pounds a month. So, I thought, if I put seventy or eighty pounds a month in a bank, then if I had an emergency I can afford private treatment. But that was ridiculous - you know, even my GP, my consultant, everyone have written to the PPP, but they won't change their policies.

What made you choose private medicine when you first began subscribing to it?

'Cause I was thinking it's a good idea to join the private, you know, because you never know. And moreover, I was worried because my parents, my brother, they had diabetes, they had a heart attack, and I thought might be, if same thing happen to me, at least I've got a private, you know, the insurance; I can go to the hospital. But everything has gone wrong. I paid that much money, and I when I need it, they refused.

And since you dropped that insurance company, have you had any private medicine since then?

Well, no, not at all. Now I'm roughly about sixty six years old. If I apply for insurance, one thing - it will be very, very costly, and the second thing is, they won't accept it.

So, all your treatment since 1999 has been National Health Service, has it?

Yes, it is, because I talk to my doctor - he is very caring doctor - and he put me, you know, the NHS. And all the treatment, all the, you know, the appointment, all the operation, so far I had, is on NHS.

And what have been your impressions of the National Health Service over the years?

Well, I can't find any fault in it. I think I'm lucky to have such good care. All the doctor, consultant I have met so far, they are marvellous and caring, and I do hope they keep doing their job properly.

Have you had anything to do with diabetes specialist nurses?

Yes, I have a diabetes nurse with the doctors' surgery. It's quite a big surgery. It's a practice, about seven or eight doctor get together. They got the nurses - three, four nurses - so one nurse is specially reserved for the diabetes care,

(14) and she's looking after me very well.

Has she given you any advice on diet?

Well, so many people give me advice. I mean, as I said to you, it depend whether you stick to the diet or you do. Now, I got so much idea - I'd learn about diet - that I can advise people what to eat and what not to eat. So, I mean, of course she does advise me, you know, about the diet and the dietician and everything, but it's a matter of, you know, the sticking.

Do you keep to the same amount of insulin always or do you adjust your insulin according to what you're eating?

No, I think I'll keep the same amount of insulin. I take, you know, the forty six unit evening time, before I go to bed, and fifty six unit early in the morning. And I stick to this one, I think it more than three or four years.

Has anyone suggested that you might adjust insulin to your diet?

Yes, they told me while I was in hospital, funnily enough, when I had the heart attack, and then I keep getting hypo. And over there, the doctor reduced my insulin so much that I was surprised, because I was taking insulin - thirty six unit early in the morning instead of fifty six, and twenty six unit I'm taking evening time, rather than forty six. But as soon as I left the hospital then my sugar levels start rising, and then I have to increase the insulin, and now I'm back to the same one: fifty six and forty six.

You mentioned earlier that you felt ashamed of having diabetes and didn't tell people. Is that in any way connected with Asian culture?

Not really. I mean, wherever you go, whether it's English culture or Asian culture, the people don't like, you know, the talk about this diabetes. I don't know why. My personal experience is that I feeling the ashame to talk about the diabetes to the Asian people, you know. Funnily enough, when I used to go to diabetes clinic, my doctor said to me, he said "why do Asian people - once they pass the age of fifty, about sixty percent people are diabetic - but they don't come forward, they don't admit they got the diabetes?". So, I was talking to some friend, we were sitting five, six friend, and I said to them, I said "this is the thing, you know, that my doctor said to me", and they start laughing. I had this time the Glucometer with me. I said "let's test it". We were five people - I test their blood. Out of five, two got the diabetes, and when I mentioned to them, I said "you got diabetes" they won't admit. They start arguing with me - "is there something wrong with your meter, not with us?". So, I don't know why. Might be there are so many things attached to the diabetes which ashame people, you know. Moreover, they had some kind of funny opinion that those people that got the diabetes, they are not man enough, so might be this is the

reason. But personally speaking, I mean, that kind of disease - diabetes - people don't want to discuss. I believe it's a lack of education or of lack of courage, or what you can say. But personally speaking, I was in an embarrassing position not to talk, and when people ask, you know, so many awkward question, I choose to avoid it.

(15) Do you think it's important that people should talk about diabetes if they've got it?

Yes, they should talk about it, but it depend again that what kind of, you know, the person he is talking to. If he's a man doctor or a man person - male - then they might talk to him. But if there is ladies involved in it, either nurse or lady doctor, then you're back to the zero one, because there are certain things they won't talk to a female person. It's only come out with a male doctor or male person.

So, what advice would you give to medical staff who specialise in diabetes to try and reach Asian people?

Well, there's a sore point is one thing - is sex life, you know, the other person. But if the doctor is sympathetic and it's a male doctor, and take the point and talk about this one, might be he can find out more than he bargained for, otherwise he won't talk to you again.

So, one advice is not to use female staff when talking to Asian men, but what about reaching Asian women who also suffer from diabetes?

It's the same thing. If it's a female then she will feel more comfortable with a female doctor or female person, rather than the male person. So, if you use, for Asian people mostly, male for male and female for female, I think they'll get the result.

Do you think there's any shame attached to type two diabetes that you have, because people will blame you for eating too much?

Not really. They don't blame, you know, the eating. They blame, you know, the circumstances and bad luck rather than the eating. They won't realise, you know, that eating causing the trouble.

Right at the beginning, you talked about your father and your brothers' diabetes. How do you feel that you're doing at your age compared with how they did?

Well, I'm doing very well, because my father, he was, must be sixty years old when he died. My brother - one, he died, he was forty four years old. The second brother died; he was fifty six. At least, you know, I reached sixty six point, and might be couple more years more than that. But funny thing is, when my father used to do exercise, he had a big veranda, and he had one, you know, pot of sugar other end and one pot of sugar other end with a spoon. He's walking. When he reached the one end, he put two spoon of sugar in his mouth, then he back again and he put, other end, two spoon of sugar in his mouth. That was his exercise. At least I'm avoiding this one.

So, to what do you attribute your comparative good health?

My wife. She's looking after me very well. She won't let me eat. She's more careful than anybody else. If it wasn't my wife, I must be in a grave.

Is that literally true?

It is literally true, and I'm grateful to her that she's doing very well.

(16) How would your life have been different if you hadn't got diabetes in 1985?

Well, I'd still be working, I still had a nursing home, I still had my job in a cricket ground, I'd still be working on a radio station. But now, since I got the diabetes, I have to give up everything, because I haven't got the energy and I get tired very soon. I'm out of breath if I walk about hundred yard, then take about ten minutes to recover my breath. So, in these circumstances, it's better to stay home and rest than to spoil the fun for everyone.

So, what keeps you going in life?

Nothing, really. I just come in and watch the TV and rest, and that's all. Now, the life fun is gone, and I said the life is not worth living because everything in my life is gone.

What advice would you give to someone newly diagnosed with diabetes?

Please look after yourself. Stick to the diet, do lot of exercise, and if you have any problem, don't hesitate, put your shame one side, talk to the proper person: doctor, specialist, anything. If you want to achieve something in your life and you want to live better and do something, then please, please be careful.

That's the kind of advice that you were given when you were first diagnosed in 1985, and yet you say you didn't keep to it. Why not?

Well, sometime, you know, that if I'm going out to see some friend, or celebration day, like Eid, Bakra Eid or Christmas, when you go to the party and there's food in front of you, you can't resist. You just try everything and here your diet gone haywire.

When I asked you what kept you going, you said, well, nothing kept you going, and that sounds a fairly depressed reaction.

It is depressing, that you spend very active life all your life, spend the time, and suddenly you just look like a cabbage. Then you're sitting all the time doing nothing. I mean, I can't do any housework, I can't do any gardening, I can't go outside. We've been to holiday for a long time, but what's left? There's nothing left in the life except misery.

Is there anything positive?

Yes, it is positive, because it brought my wife and myself very close to it, because we spend most of the time together. We're doing things together, sometime we argue together, and then I'm looking forward to meet my friend. I can drive all

right, there's no problem in driving, so I can drive, go and pay visit. We talk, we listen, we laugh, and that's it. That's how we spend most of my time.