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Diabetic shares adventures, frustrations

By JEFFREY SIMPSON

Don't tell Steve Beriault that there's something he can't do. Thanks to being a diabetic, he's heard that all his life.

"I wanted to do a lot of things as a person with diabetes but I was barred from attempting them: police and RCMP, airplane pilot, fireman, certain sports," Beriault, 59, says in a recent email interview.

"When I was young I was constantly watched by adults in case something happened but as I got older I rebelled and played as many sports (football, track, soccer, hockey, lacrosse, etc) and became a loner and did everything I was told not to do."

One such rebellious act was getting on a bicycle and pedaling thousands of kilometres across Canada. He recounts this event and others in **Tales in the Insulin Vial** (Raider Publishing, \$17.99), a memoir of sorts about what living with diabetes is like.

"It was after my failed pancreas transplant and three months in hospital that I finally decided to write the book," Beriault says.

He was born in Lachine, Que., and was diagnosed with diabetes when he was two years old. He spent much of his childhood trying to hide his illness from his peers while avoiding falling into a hypoglycemic reaction due to low blood sugar.

Beriault wants people to know how serious the disease is. He points out that the growth of diabetes is a pandemic, with about 240 million diabetics worldwide — 24 million of them are Type 1, like him, which means they depend on insulin to survive. And the long term use of insulin leads to blindness, loss of limbs, kidney failure and nerve problems, among others.

"For the average person, diabetes is a non disease as long as you take insulin," he says.

Few, if any, understand that if a Type 1 diabetic doesn't inject insulin then they would go into coma from high blood glucose and die within a matter of days."

Books are available at ~~amazon.ca~~ amazon.ca.

(jsimpson@herald.ca)