

Diabetes and Covid - The Deadly Duo

More studies are being published into the clear link between diabetes and covid-19 and the dangers for people with diabetes who survive the virus suffering severe long-term adverse health effects.

Studies from China, UK, Italy and the USA, have shown that people with diabetes have a higher risk of more adverse outcomes from COVID-19 compared with people without diabetes. There is as yet no conclusive evidence of a difference between type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

Using data from the COVID patient notification system, UK Investigators have studied the relative and absolute risk of

In-hospital related death with-19 in people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. There were 23,804 hospital deaths with COVID-19 in England



reported to 11th May 2020. Overall, one third of these deaths occurred in people with diabetes.

Adjusted for age, sex, deprivation, ethnicity and geographical regions, people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes had 3.5

and 2.03 times the relative risk of dying in hospital from COVID-19 compared to those without diabetes.

Age remains a major factor for people with diabetes at risk of death with COVID-19. Mean age of death in type 1 diabetes was 72 years and type 2 diabetes was 77.9 years.

Additional important factors which increase the risk of in-patient death with COVID-19 in the UK are social deprivation, British Asian Minority ethnic (BAME) group and the presence of comorbidities such as coronary heart disease, cardiovascular disease and heart failure.

Inside this issue – Africa Special, Covid-19 and Asian Risks, First Audit of FreeStyle Device, Latest Research, PDGN News and lots of Advocacy Action ideas.

Heart Attacks Twice as Likely with Type 2 Diabetes

Researchers from Aarhus University Hospital, Denmark, found that people with diabetes can reduce their risk for heart attacks in half, simply by taking medications designed to prevent them.

People with type 2 diabetes are twice as likely to have a heart attack or die from heart disease compared to people without diabetes.

The research results suggest that starting patients on medications that prevent cardiovascular disease on diagnosis of diabetes has a substantial impact on the risk of heart attacks and premature death.

The study was presented at this September's **'European Society of Cardiology' ESC Congress 2020**, having examined how these changes may have affected the risk of heart attacks and premature death in patients with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes and no previous cardiovascular disease.

The researchers identified all patients in Denmark initiating therapy for type 2 diabetes from 1996 to 2011 -- a total of 211,278 patients. Read more by clicking on the link below.

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/lifestyle/health/2020/aug/30/diabetics-can-cut-heart-attack-risk-by-taking-pills-2190245.html>

Insomnia Recognised as Indicators of Late onset Type 2 diabetes

A new 'global atlas' study published in *Diabetologia* (the journal of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes [EASD]) is the first to identify insomnia as a risk factor associated with increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes (T2D). The study identifies 34 risk factors that are thought to increase (19) or decrease risk (15), as well as a further 21 'suggestive' risk factors where evidence was not quite as strong.

Researchers found evidence of causal associations between 34 exposures (19 risk factors and 15 protective factors) and T2D.

Insomnia was identified as a novel risk factor, with people with insomnia being 17% more likely to develop T2D than those without.

The other 18 risk factors for T2D were depression, systolic blood pressure,

starting smoking, lifetime smoking, coffee (caffeine) consumption, blood plasma levels of the amino acids isoleucine, valine and leucine, liver enzyme alanine aminotransferase (a sign of liver function), childhood and adulthood body mass index (BMI), body fat percentage, internal fat mass, resting heart rate, and blood plasma levels of four fatty acids.

The study confirmed several previously established risk factors and identified novel potential risk factors for T2D. Findings should inform public health policies for the primary prevention of type 2 diabetes.

<https://www.thedailystar.net/health/news/insomnia-identified-new-risk-factor-1960129>

Advocacy Action: Do health policies take account of any or all of these risk factors?

First Audit of FreeStyle Libre



The Association of British Clinical Diabetologists (ABCD) have conducted the first national (UK) audit of one of the increasing numbers of glucose monitoring devices.

Studying Abbot's FreeStyle Libre device they found from 10,000 users across 102 UK hospitals that the system improves control and patient awareness of low blood glucose levels. The report also concludes that the system reduces diabetes distress and hospital admissions, while also improving HbA1c levels.

ABCD said so far there has been "no comprehensive, real-world, large population-based data sets looking at the impact of FreeStyle Libre on multiple aspects of diabetes care".

Professor Thozhukat Sathyapalan, Clinical Lead, ABCD is quoted as saying: "These results apply to those patients with type 1, whose diabetes is poorly controlled or those who suffer from complications such as frequent



hypoglycaemia or fear of hypoglycaemia.

"They demonstrate that the use of the Freestyle Libre sys-

tem can significantly improve the experiences of those living with type 1 diabetes, increasing awareness and understanding, aiding self-management of the condition and reducing pressure on the NHS in terms of the ongoing management and treatment of patients with diabetes."

For those people with more than seven months of follow-up data, the following outcomes were observed:

- A significant reduction in HbA1c from 67.5 mmol/mol (8.3%) to 62.3 mmol/mol (7.9%) (data for 3,182 people with diabetes- with an even greater reduction in those who had high HbA1c levels before they started using FreeStyle Libre. In addition, the more people engaged with the management of their diabetes, by using the technology and scanning more frequently, the greater the HbA1c reduction.
- A significant improvement in patient's awareness of impending hypoglycaemia measured by the Gold score (data for 2,801 patients). Over half of people (53%) with impaired hypoglycaemia awareness at the start of the audit had regained awareness at follow-up.
- A reduction in patient reported hypoglycaemic events: 85% said that they were able to reduce the frequency of hypoglycaemia; 80% stated that they were able to reduce the amount of time in hypoglycaemia; and 75% reported a reduction in nocturnal hypoglycaemia.
- A reduction in diabetes distress – feeling overwhelmed by the demands of living with diabetes and/or a feeling of failing with their diabetes routine (data for 2,532 people with diabetes).
- A significant reduction in paramedic callouts and hospital admissions due to hypoglycaemia and hyperglycaemia / diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) at seven and a half months follow-up, compared to 12 months before FreeStyle Libre use (data for over 1,900 people with diabetes).

The study findings have been published in Diabetes Care.

Advocacy Action: What percentage of Type 1 patients in your country use Flash Monitoring or Continuous Glucose Monitoring devices? What can be done to increase uptake to reduce longer term costs?

Africa News Special



High Blood Pressure and Diabetes top Covid Killers in Africa

A World Health Organisation (WHO) analysis of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in 14 countries across Africa found that hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and asthma are the comorbidities most associated with Covid-19 deaths.

In Kenya, around half of Covid-19 deaths were of people with NCDs while in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, such patients accounted for 85 per cent of all Covid-19 deaths.

Africans living with NCDs such as hypertension and diabetes are more likely to suffer severe cases of Covid-19 and die, the World Health Organization says.

These chronic conditions require continuous treatment, but as governments across the continent address the ongoing Covid pandemic, health services for NCDs have been severely disrupted.

The WHO's regional director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, is quoted in the *Kenyan Star* saying: "Millions of Africans living with NCD's are at greater risk of complications or dying from Covid-19, So it is very concerning to find that just when

people with hypertension and other chronic conditions most need support, many are being left out in the cold."

Limited Out-Patient Care

In a WHO survey of 41 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, 22 per cent of countries reported that only emergency inpatient care for chronic conditions is available, while 37 per cent of countries reported that outpatient care is limited.

Hypertension management has been disrupted in 59 per cent of the countries, while diabetic complications management has been disrupted in 56 per cent of the countries.

The closure or slowdown in services is likely to further aggravate the underlying conditions of patients, leading to more severe cases of NCDs. It also worsens the risks of people living with chronic conditions to Covid-19.

The WHO is working with countries to identify the challenges associated with providing essential services for people with NCDs and is supporting governments to implement strategies to increase service availability.

Advocacy Action: Is your Government working with the WHO? Do you have an action plan in place to meet the challenge? Are there external agencies who could help, for example. Médecins sans frontières (MSF)?



Zimbabwe



Nurses Behind Better NCD Management

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are estimated to account for 31% of total deaths, with diabetes, hypertension and asthma as the main killers in Zimbabwe.

The country has been facing a number of challenges most notably in the health sector. Healthcare workers are overwhelmed and doctors, especially in rural areas, are scarce. Millions of Zimbabweans are disconnected from health networks, living far away from larger cities and unable to afford the cost of travel and even treatment.

In 2016, Médecins sans frontières (MSF) collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Child Care to pilot a model of care adapted to the local environment to

address the double burden of diabetes and hypertension and HIV in a rural province. Nurses in seven Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities and one hospital developed the knowledge and skills to diagnose, initiate treatment and monitor diabetes and hypertension patients.

More than 3000 patients are registered in a dedicated recording system that also provides education on managing their condition. For the project duration, MSF provided free medication, including periodic refills and regular monitoring of blood pressure and blood glucose.

The challenge now is to encourage the Ministry of Health and Child Care to maintain and replicate this NCD healthcare model across the country. care management.

Advocacy Action: Would a similar response work in your country? Are you encouraging your Government to act? Could PDGN help you?

Kenya



Fresh Launch for Kenya's Universal Health Coverage Programme

Health Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe (pictured) has said the Universal Health



Coverage (UHC) programme will be launched afresh to serve Kenyans better. UHC, whose pilot phase was launched in December 2018 by

President Uhuru Kenyatta, it is intended to ensure all Kenyans have access to preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services at minimum financial burden.

Kagwe said the programme will be under the National Hospital Insurance Fund, which will biometrically capture the details of everyone registered.

The pilot phase covered Machakos, Kisumu, Nyeri and Isiolo counties. The lessons learnt will inform the roll out of UHC in the rest of the country.

Senator Ephraim Maina, and Governor Mutahi Kahiga from the pilot region have called for the UHC to be extended as many people will be exposed after the expiry of the pilot phase.

Governor Kahiga said it will not be possible to sustain the free healthcare services without the same being supplemented by other health insurers. He said the county's resources were strained by communicable diseases like Covid-19 and non-communicable ones like cancer, diabetes and hypertension.

Advocacy Action: Have estimates been made of the cost of diabetes in your county and projected costs into the future? Is there a national plan to reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes and treat the condition in ways that reduce expensive complications later in life?

Nigeria



Besides Covid-19 where cases approach 60,000 and over 1,000 deaths, Nigeria has a huge burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Covid statistics actually paint an impressive picture for a nation of 200 million people with a comparatively weak health system.

The country is suffering from another health crisis that hardly came in the limelight. The World Health Organisation (WHO) reported 115,950 cancer cases and 70,328 deaths in Nigeria in 2018. Research suggests that cancer deaths in Nigeria and other developing countries may rise by 70% until 2030, the year fixed by the UN to achieve universal health coverage and several other health targets.

At a time when the country has deployed its maximum resources in combating Covid-19, concerns have arisen about the handling of other deadly diseases like cancer, Lassa Fever, Yellow Fever, Monkey Pox, Meningitis, and Diabetes. To read a comprehensive picture of Nigeria's healthcare system and Covid response. click on the link below.

<https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/health/1200815-post-covid-19-nigeria-needs-a-robust-health-management-information-system-to-handle-high-disease-burden>

Advocacy Action: How is your country meeting the United Nations Universal Health targets? Can you obtain a debate or a report to share with others? Are their lessons to be learned from the Nigerian experience?

Benefits of Soybeans in Type 2 Prevention

A leading nutrition expert has urged Nigerians to explore soybeans as a good food source, to alleviate malnutrition and achieve good health.

Professor Ibiyemi Olayiwola, Professor of Human Nutrition and Dietetics, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), described soybeans as an excellent source of protein, with the added advantage of being affordable. She noted that the benefits of soybeans are often understated in the country.



"soybeans are a complete protein source, which possess the ability to prevent non-communicable diseases such as protein deficiency, diabetes, hyperlipidemia and hypertension, which are growing health burdens in Nigeria. Soybeans have low glycaemic index and low trans-fat oil, which are highly beneficial to the human circulatory system."

She believes that consuming an affordable high-quality protein like soybeans, in any of its forms, will gradually mitigate protein deficiency.

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202009010363.html>

Advocacy Action: Does your country have nutritional targets? Does your population suffer from protein or other nutritional deficiencies? Does your Government promote soy-based foods?

South Africa

Diabetes Behind South Africans Increasing Risk of Vision Loss



Loss of vision due to diabetic eye complications and age-related visual conditions is on the rise in South Africa.

Diabetic retinopathy, a complication of diabetes that damages the blood vessels in the retina at the back of the eye, is the leading cause of vision loss globally.

The number of people with diabetics in South Africa has risen sharply from 1.3 million in 2010 to 4.5 million in 2019, it is expected to reach 6 million by 2030.

Retina South Africa and the Ophthalmological Society of South Africa (OSSA) joined forces to create

awareness of vision loss during September's World Retina Week.

Dr Gerhard Kok, President of the South African Vitreoretinal Society, a sub-society of OSSA, said that about 1.7% of diabetic patients would develop diabetic retinopathy, while improved life expectancy globally meant that worldwide incidence of age-related macular degeneration was expected to reach 288-million in 2040, from 196-million in 2020.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Retina SA has conducted an outreach programme to give assistance and advice to the thousands of South Africans losing vision to retinal conditions.

Advocacy Action: Does your county have a diabetic eye screening programme? Can you advocate for one, perhaps by linking with your national diabetes or Ophthalmological society?

Advocacy Brings Results

Across the world great strides are being made increasing awareness of diabetes and its comorbidities with some of the most effective actions being taken where cross-party groups operate. PDGN exists to help form such groups and to support them, as well as to assist the advocacy of elected politicians working alone. PDGN members can tap into a network of elected advocates who may be able to help you be even more effective or to help you start or grow a diabetes group in your legislature. Contact adrian@pdgn.co.uk

What Is Advocacy?

Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group that aims to influence decisions. It includes activities and publications to influence public policy, laws and budgets by using facts, their relationships, the media, and messaging to educate officials and the public.



More News From Around the World



First Nation Children 25 Times More Likely to Have Type 2

A newly released study has found that children in First Nations communities are 25 times more likely to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes compared to other children in Manitoba.

The study was conducted by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP) in partnership with the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM).

It looked at how many people in Manitoba had type 2 diabetes, the healthcare services they were receiving as well as their complications as it was First Nations communities are proportionally affected.

The number of younger people in Manitoba diagnosed with type 2 diabetes has increased by more than 50% in the past decade. Approximately 109,000 Manitobans have been diagnosed with type

2 diabetes, with more people being diagnosed with the disease each year.

It was noted that First Nations individuals are accessing primary care at a similar rate as all other Manitobans, but the care received is not reducing the complications from type 2 diabetes, such as leg and foot amputations and kidney failure.

In a press release, the study's investigators noted that the disease has often been naively associated with lifestyle choices, leading people with the illness to blame themselves while health care professionals fail to look for other solutions. In the management of type 2 diabetes these would include healthcare as well as addressing the other inequalities such as poverty, racism, and the effects of colonialism and food security issues.

The report urged that type 2 diabetes care cannot have a one-size, fits-all approach, especially in First Nations communities, which need strategies that work for their unique needs.

<https://winnipeg.sun.com/news/provincial/children-in-first-nations-communities-25-times-more-likely-to->



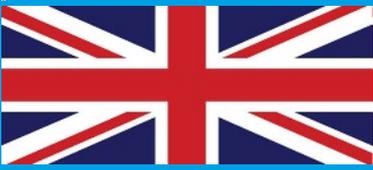
Once-a-Week Injectable Drug for Type 2 Diabetes

Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Ltd (HPL) and Eli Lilly and Company today announced the launch of Trulicity (dulaglutide) in Bangladesh. This is the first once-a-week use, injectable medication designed to improve blood sugar control in adults with type 2 diabetes, according to a press release issued to media.

The drug comes in an easy to use, single-dose pen that does not require mixing or measuring and can be administered at any time of the day, independent of meals.

As Type 2 diabetes is a progressive disease and in Bangladesh many patients do not meet their treatment goals. It is hoped that this new, non-insulin, injectable will better meet patients' needs and convenience.

Advocacy Action: What policies are in place to ensure pharmaceutical research in your country is translated into affordable medicines for the population?



Covid-19 Greater Risk Among Asians

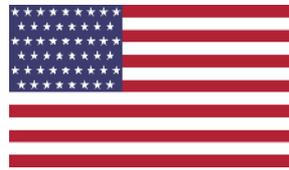
The UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published a report showing Asian people are up to five times more likely to contract Covid-19 than white people.

The research also found that more than half of pregnant women with Covid-19 are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and warns that BAME communities could be at a greater risk.

Similar trends were also discovered among antibody tests, which show whether someone has had Covid-19 previously.

The results indicated that the rate among Asian people was 10.8%, with Black British people closely following at 9.5%, and the rates among white people were only 4.8%.

<https://www.diabetes.co.uk/news/2020/sep/government-report-states-asian-people-at-greater-risk-of-contracting-covid.html>



Pramila's Bill Approved

Representative Pramila Jayapal's (pictured) South Asian Heart Health Bill has passed another stage in Congress.

As reported during earlier stages, the US House of Representatives has now passed a bipartisan bill aimed at raising awareness about the alarming rate of heart disease in South Asian communities throughout the United States while investing in strategies to reverse the deadly trend.

The South Asian Heart Health Awareness and Research Act was introduced by Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal.

"As the first South Asian American woman ever elected to the House of Representatives, I am fully committed to not only educating the South Asian

community about the risk factors for heart disease but also ensuring that those living with heart disease receive the care, treatment, resources and support they need," Jayapal said.

South Asians make up 25 percent of the world's population but 50 percent of global cardiovascular deaths.

Additionally, South Asian Americans are four times more at risk of developing heart disease than the general population, have a much greater chance of having a heart attack before age 50 and have emerged as the ethnic group with the highest prevalence of Type 2 diabetes, which is a leading cause of heart disease.



Advocacy Action: Are minority ethnic groups and their specific health care needs recognised in your country? Can you question decision makers to identify minority groups and ensure targeted prevention, screening and early diagnosis programmes, and the best treatments according to the patient group by ethnicity?



Study Could Lead to More Precise Type 2 Treatments

A study involving over 19,000 people with type 2 diabetes using eight clinically relevant variables including age at diagnosis, waist circumference and HbA1c levels has made a finding that could facilitate a more precise treatment of the disease.

The India-based study of people with type-2 diabetes has identified four “clusters”, or novel subgroups of individuals, showing distinct characteristics. The study, labelled ‘INSPIRED’, classified type-2 diabetes into clusters that provide insights into the factors that drive the disease in

these groups. And this further helped in predicting the risk of complications and in focussing more attention on individuals with the highest risk of developing complications of diabetes, a note on the study said.

The INSPIRED study, published online in *BMJ Open Diabetes Research and Care*, was a collaborative project between the MDRF and Dr Mohan’s Centre, along with Scotland’s University of Dundee.

Recently, a Scandinavian study had identified five subtypes. Pointing to the importance of the Indian

study, Colin Palmer, Chair, Department of Pharmacogenomics, School of Medicine, University of Dundee, said that treatment in India was done on guidelines based on studies in a Caucasian population. The latest study could bring in a more precise method to treating diabetes, he said.

Advocacy Action: Does your health care system recognise the need for more targeted treatments for people with diabetes? Do the policies of your government recognise the need for a targeted approach?



Type 2 Guidelines for Young People

Guidelines for identifying, preventing and managing Type 2 diabetes among young people in Australian and New Zealand have been published for the first time.

Type 2 diabetes in children has been rare but numbers are rising. Consequently, this is the first-time guidance for children and teenagers that PDGN has heard about. Up until now healthcare professionals had to refer to adult guidelines.

Study author Dr Lexia Peña, Senior Lecturer at the Robinson Research Institute, University of Adelaide, said: “The obesity epidemic, particularly in Indigenous young people, has caused the increase in the incidence of type 2 diabetes, especially in children older than 10 years of age.

Advocacy Action: Is Type 2 increasing among young people in your country. Is there information available specifically produced for young people?

PDGN News



We have 11 members in the Lebanon and our thoughts and good wishes go out to them, their families and friends following the devastating explosion in Beirut where most are based.

Oh Vienna!

It was a most unusual European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) annual meeting this year. Technically we were in Vienna, technologically attendees were sat behind computers in their home countries with an Avatar representing them on-line. We had a stall in the virtual Associations Village that other Avatars could visit for more information about PDGN or to 'bag' a leaflet or business card. EASD President Prof. Stefano Del Prado and Senior Vice-President Prof. Chantal Mathieu visited our stall and took the selfie below.

Hopefully we can all attend in person next year, although the opportunity to attend on-line



ought to be considered for those who are not normally or sometimes unable to attend. A hybrid may well be the way forward.

From PDGN's point of view the opportunity to network was much reduced and footfall past the virtual stall was almost non-existent in the absence of a nearby catering point or washroom.

Can PDGN Help You More?

You may already have a group and would welcome some extra support from PDGN. Get in touch with our Secretary General Adrian Sanders – adrian@pdgn.co.uk and find out what we can do.

Can We Help You Form A Group?

If you can persuade a few colleagues to join PDGN – it's free and only takes a couple of minutes to fill in a form on-line at www.odgn.co.uk – we can liaise with you to arrange an on-line meeting and put you in touch with someone who can help you get your group off the ground.

What's Happening in Your Patch?

Let us know what's happening in your patch?

Add PDGN to your press releases, send us a report on your successes and challenges preferably with photos to share with others.

Together we make the greatest difference

It's hard acting on your own but PDGN wants to hear from you. All the successful groups started with just one person. Send your stories and

photos or requests for help and support from others to adrian@pdgn.co.uk

Research Corner Continued



Chinese research offers a diabetes prediction model.

[https://jwcn-
eurasipjournals.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s13638-020-01765-7](https://jwcn-eurasipjournals.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s13638-020-01765-7)



People who eat a lot of industrially processed junk food are more likely to exhibit a change in their chromosomes linked to ageing, according to Spanish research..

<https://www.pulse.ng/news/world/junk-food-linked-to-age-marker-in-chromosomes-study/ty8qw50>



Newer type 2 diabetes medications have heart and kidney disease benefits.

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-09/aha-nt2092320.php



Weekly Injection for Type 2 Diabetes? Australian researchers believe a new enzyme discovery suggests its possible.

<https://theconversation.com/weekly-injection-could-treat-type-2-diabetes-new-enzyme-discovery-suggests-145312>

Please Ask Your Colleagues to Join

Our membership is our strength and it constantly turns over as people lose elections or stand down - we have to constantly recruit.

Please ask your colleagues to join, it's free and there's a membership form on our website.



www.pdgn.co.uk



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Technology News

Times' Number 1 Type 2 Diabetes prevention App

<https://www.diabetes.co.uk/news/2020/jul/low-carb-program-ranked-best-health-app-2020.html>

Flash Glucose Monitoring Could Reduce Duration of Type 2 Hypoglycaemia

<https://www.medwirenews.com/diabetes/liberates-hypoglycemia-acs-flash-monitoring/18408618>

Global Advocacy Diabetes is the newsletter for members and friends of PDGN, the Parliamentarians for Diabetes Global Network.

Our primary objective is to enable law-makers to help prevent diabetes, encourage early diagnosis of diabetes and improve the treatment of diabetes in every part of the world. We exist to help advocates for diabetes and its comorbidities wherever they are.

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