



An initiative of the World Health Organization and the International Diabetes Federation



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⁶⁶The world is facing a growing diabetes epidemic of potentially devastating proportions. Its impact will be felt most severely in developing countries. The World Health Organization and the International Diabetes Federation are working together to support ongoing initiatives to prevent and manage diabetes and its complications, and to ensure the best quality of life possible for people with diabetes worldwide. Together we are helping to provide countries with the means to face the challenges that lie ahead. It is time for diabetes action now ⁹⁹

Lobel Beagehole

Dr Robert Beaglehole World Health Organization

Sim diferrie

Prof Pierre Lefèbvre International Diabetes Federation

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díabetesactionnow



⁶I used to spend much of my time in taverns, smoking and drinking. This was the time to give up smoking. I still have the occasional drink. I spend much more time with my family and I have a richer life as a result. We also eat much more healthily. ⁹⁹

Oupa Gumede, 47 is a South African businessman, who was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes two years ago. He runs a transport business as well as a pre-school. He emphasizes the importance of education in helping people with diabetes to accept their condition.

In many countries diabetes consumes between 5% and 10% of the healthcare budget, and more than 50% of that cost is due to diabetic complications.

The diabetes action now programme

díabetes action now is a joint initiative of the World Health Organization and the International Diabetes Federation. It is one of several initiatives being undertaken by WHO and IDF, globally, regionally and within countries, that together have the overall goal of reducing the impact of diabetes and related chronic conditions upon the health of children and adults worldwide. **díabetes** action now is being supported by a World Diabetes Foundation grant to IDF and WHO funds.

The programme focuses on low- and middle-income communities, particularly in developing countries. Its purpose is to stimulate and support the adoption of effective measures for the surveillance, prevention and control of diabetes. A key aim of the programme is to achieve a substantial increase in global awareness about diabetes and its complications.

Over the next three years, diabetes action now will:

- 1. work to achieve a major increase in awareness about diabetes, its complications, and its prevention, particularly among health policy makers in low- and middle-income countries and communities;
- 2. initiate and support projects to generate and widely disseminate new knowledge on awareness about diabetes and its economic impact in low- and middle-income communities;
- 3. produce and widely disseminate a new scientifically-based review on the prevention of diabetes and the complications of diabetes;
- 4. produce up-to-date, practical guidance for policy makers in low- and middle-income countries, on the contents, structure and implementation of national diabetes programmes; and
- 5. provide and maintain a web-based resource to help policy makers implement national diabetes programmes.



The overall purpose of diabetes action now

To stimulate and support the adoption of effective measures for the surveillance, prevention and control of diabetes in low- and middle-income countries and communities.

Diabetes is a major threat to global public health that is rapidly getting worse,

Four key messages about diabetes

DIABETES is a life-threatening condition

- Worldwide, 3.2 million deaths are attributable to diabetes every year.
- One in 20 deaths is attributable to diabetes; 8,700 deaths every day; six deaths every minute.
- At least one in ten deaths among adults between 35 and 64 years old is attributable to diabetes.
- Three-quarters of the deaths among people with diabetes aged under 35 years are due to their condition.

These estimates are based on relative differences in risk of death between people with diabetes and those without. They include deaths where diabetes would have been the underlying cause of death or would have been mentioned as a contributory condition on the medical certificate of cause of death.

THREATENING

DIABETES is a common condition and its frequency is dramatically rising all over the world

- At least 171 million people worldwide have diabetes. This figure is likely to more than double by 2030.
- In developing countries the number of people with diabetes will increase by 150% in the next 25 years.
- The global increase in diabetes will occur because of population ageing and growth, and because of increasing trends towards obesity, unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles.
- In developed countries most people with diabetes are above the age of retirement, whereas in developing countries those most frequently affected are aged between 35 and 64.

diabetes action now

and the biggest impact is on adults of working age in developing countries?

A full and healthy life is possible with DIABETES

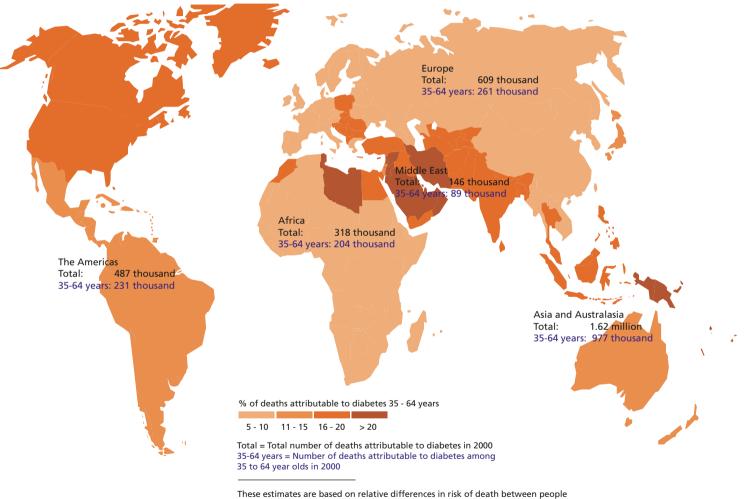
- Studies have shown that, with good management, many of the complications of diabetes can be prevented or delayed.
- Effective management includes lifestyle measures such as a healthy diet, physical activity, maintaining appropriate weight and not smoking.
- Medication often has an important role to play, particularly for the control of blood glucose, blood pressure and blood lipids.
- Through the provision of optimal health care the risk of developing diabetic complications can be reduced substantially.
- Helping people with diabetes to acquire the knowledge and skills to manage their own condition is central to their leading a full and healthy life.

In many cases, DIABETES can be prevented

- The prevention of type 1 diabetes is not yet possible and remains an objective for the future. The prevention of type 2 diabetes has been shown to be possible and requires action now.
- Trials have shown that sustained lifestyle changes in diet and physical activity can reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. For example, the Finnish Diabetes Prevention Study showed that a better diet, increased physical activity and modest weight loss could substantially reduce the development of type 2 diabetes in middle-aged adults at high risk.
- In all the studies conducted so far in people at high risk, lifestyle changes have been substantially more effective than the use of drugs.
- The scale of the problem requires population-wide measures to reduce levels of overweight and obesity, and physical inactivity.
- Informed policy decisions on transport, urban design, and on food pricing and advertising can play an important part in reducing the population-wide risks of developing type 2 diabetes.



Deaths attributable to diabetes



These estimates are based on relative differences in risk of death between people with diabetes and those without. They include deaths where diabetes would have been the underlying cause of death or would have been mentioned as a contributory condition on the medical certificate of cause of death.