

The silent pandemic

The Health Column

22 Oct
2014

Diabetes has been described as the silent pandemic. There are approximately 1.1 million Australians living with diabetes, and around 100,000 new diagnoses each year. An estimated 280 Australians develop diabetes each day. Indigenous Australians are three times more likely to have type 2 diabetes compared with non-Indigenous Australians.

There are also 'hidden' consequences of diabetes. Research shows that for every person diagnosed with diabetes, there is a carer who also 'lives' with the disease in a support role. This means that an estimated 2.2 million Australians are affected by diabetes every day.



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The financial cost of type 2 diabetes is estimated at \$10.3 billion. Of this, carer costs are estimated at \$4.4 billion, productivity losses at \$4.1 billion, health system costs at \$1.1 billion and \$1.1 billion due to obesity.

A reduction in type 2 diabetes will result in cost savings for the health budget, increased participation and productivity in the workforce, and better health outcomes for Australians.

Worldwide, new data show that a staggering 350 million people are living with diabetes. In Australia, studies show that nearly one in four Australian adults either has diabetes or 'impaired glucose metabolism' which is associated with a substantial risk of diabetes and heart disease.

There is an urgent need to promote the issues surrounding this pandemic. The minds of the general public, of practitioners and researchers, of the media and politicians, should be focused on diabetes and related chronic diseases. There is also a need for increased understanding of the economic and societal issues of diabetes and its complications, including the escalating costs to individuals, families, workplaces, and governments.

Clearly diabetes is a serious health crisis, but it's not all bad news. Up to 58 percent of cases of type 2 diabetes can be prevented, and good blood glucose control and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can significantly improve complications associated with diabetes.

World Diabetes Day is celebrated every year on November 14. The World Diabetes Day campaign, led by the International Diabetes Federation and its member associations, engages

millions of people worldwide in diabetes advocacy and awareness. World Diabetes Day was created in 1991 in response to growing concerns about the escalating health threat that diabetes poses. World Diabetes Day became an official United Nations Day in 2007. The campaign keeps diabetes firmly in the public spotlight.

Weight management is an essential part of diabetes management. The resulting problems of obesity are well known – not only type 2 diabetes, but also cardiovascular (heart and blood vessel) disease, social exclusion and low self-esteem. Your local pharmacy is your health destination, so talk to them about how to lose weight.

There are many other things your local pharmacy can offer to help manage diabetes. A Diabetes MedsCheck provides an in-pharmacy review for people with diabetes. The review focuses on type 2 diabetes medicines management, monitoring devices, education and self-management. It aims to optimise use of medicine, blood glucose monitoring and blood glucose control. This is achieved through improved compliance with diabetes medicines as well as training and education.

In addition, you can get more information on diabetes and how to maintain a healthy weight from pharmacies around Australia providing the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's Self Care health information. Self Care Fact Cards available from these pharmacies include topics such as *Diabetes Type 1, Diabetes Type 2, Blood Glucose Monitoring* as well as lifestyle topics such as *Weight and Health*.

Visit your local pharmacy on World Diabetes Day, November 14, and find out how they can help you manage your diabetes and general health.

For the nearest Self Care pharmacy location phone the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia on 1300 369 772, or go to www.psa.org.au 'Supporting practice' then 'Self Care', and then 'Find a Self Care pharmacy'.