

Latest figures show over 4.5 million people now living with diabetes in South Africa as the numbers continue to rise

12.8% of adult population in South Africa now living with diabetes

International Diabetes Federation launches 9th Edition of IDF Diabetes Atlas to mark World Diabetes Day 2019

IDF Diabetes Atlas highlights importance of preventing the condition and tackling its complications to protect individuals, families and society

(14 November 2019) - On World Diabetes Day, the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) is releasing new figures that highlight the alarming growth in the prevalence of diabetes around the world. 38 million more adults are now estimated to be living with diabetes globally compared to the results published in 2017. New findings published today in the 9th Edition of the IDF Diabetes Atlas, show that South Africa is now in the top 10 countries for absolute increase in diabetes prevalence.

The IDF Diabetes Atlas 9th Edition reports that the prevalence of diabetes in South Africa has reached 12.8%, now 137% higher than previously reported. In 2019, over 4.5 million adults in South Africa are estimated to be living with diabetes – putting them at risk of life-threatening complications. Over two million of these 4.5 million, are undiagnosed and, as a result, may be particularly at risk.

Globally, an estimated 463 million adults are living with diabetes and there are 19 million in Africa alone. Type 2 diabetes accounts for up to 90% of the total.

The rise in the number of people with type 2 diabetes is driven by a complex interplay of socio-economic, demographic, environmental and genetic factors. Key contributors include urbanisation, an ageing population, decreasing levels of physical activity and increasing levels of overweight and obesity. For reasons which are unknown, type 1 diabetes is also on the rise.

Diabetes has an impact on all age groups, regardless of geography and income. Globally, over 1.1 million children and adolescents are living with type 1 diabetes, while three in every four people with diabetes (352 million) are of working age (20-64 years). The rise in prevalence is putting a strain on the capacity of countries to guarantee regular and affordable access to essential medicines and appropriate care. This leaves many struggling to manage their diabetes, placing their health at serious risk.

When their diabetes is undetected or when they are inadequately supported, people with diabetes are at risk of serious and life-threatening complications, such as heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, blindness and lower-limb amputation. These result in reduced quality of life and higher healthcare costs, and place undue stress on families.

“Diabetes is a serious threat to global health that respects neither socioeconomic status nor national boundaries,” said Atlas committee member Dr Dinky Levitt. “The increasing prevalence of diabetes in South Africa is a wake-up call. We must do more to prevent type 2 diabetes, diagnose all forms of diabetes early and prevent complications. We must also ensure that every person with diabetes has affordable and uninterrupted access to the care they need.”

Much can be done to reduce the impact of diabetes. Evidence suggests that type 2 diabetes can often be prevented, while early diagnosis and access to appropriate care for all types of diabetes can avoid or delay complications in people living with the condition.

Other key global findings from the IDF Diabetes Atlas 9th Edition include:

- Diabetes is among the top ten causes of death, with up to half of deaths occurring in people under the age of 60.
- The total number of people with diabetes is predicted to rise to 578 million by 2030 and to 700 million by 2045.
- 374 million adults have impaired glucose tolerance (IGT), placing them at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- Diabetes was responsible for an estimated \$760 billion in healthcare expenditure in 2019
- One in six live births are affected by hyperglycaemia in pregnancy (HIP).

For more information and supporting data about the national, regional and global prevalence of diabetes included in the IDF Diabetes Atlas 9th Edition, visit www.diabetesatlas.org.

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About the IDF Diabetes Atlas

The IDF Diabetes Atlas is an authoritative resource on the global impact of diabetes. First published in 2000, it is updated periodically by IDF in collaboration with experts from around the world and contains data on diabetes prevalence, mortality and expenditure on global, Regional and national levels. The IDF Diabetes Atlas draws attention to the importance and growing impact of diabetes in all countries and regions. www.diabetesatlas.org

About the International Diabetes Federation

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) is an umbrella organization of over 230 national diabetes associations in 170 countries and territories. It represents the interests of the growing number of people with diabetes and those at risk. The Federation has been leading the global diabetes community since 1950. www.idf.org