

# South and Central America

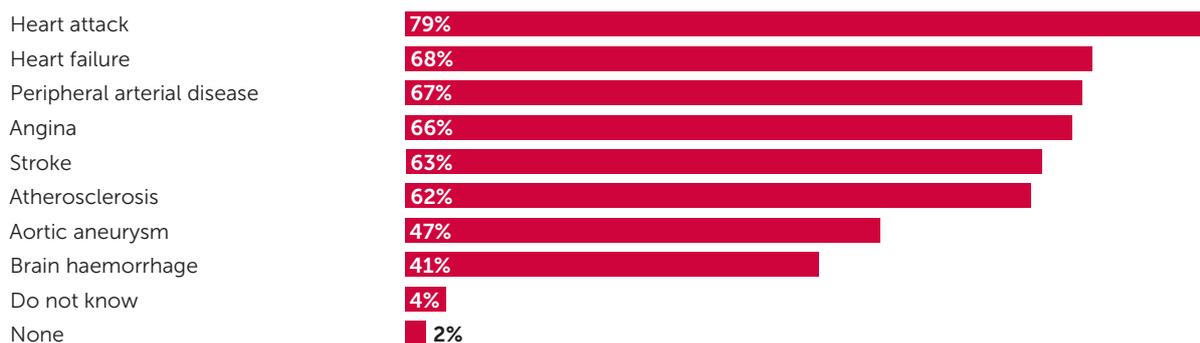
## Participant characteristics

Of the 936 respondents from IDF's South and Central America Region, the majority (57%) were women. Most participants (66%) were aged under 60, with 14% under 40. Just over two thirds (67%) had been living with diabetes for fewer than nine years. The majority (58%) had tertiary level education, 30% had secondary level education and 10% had primary school education.

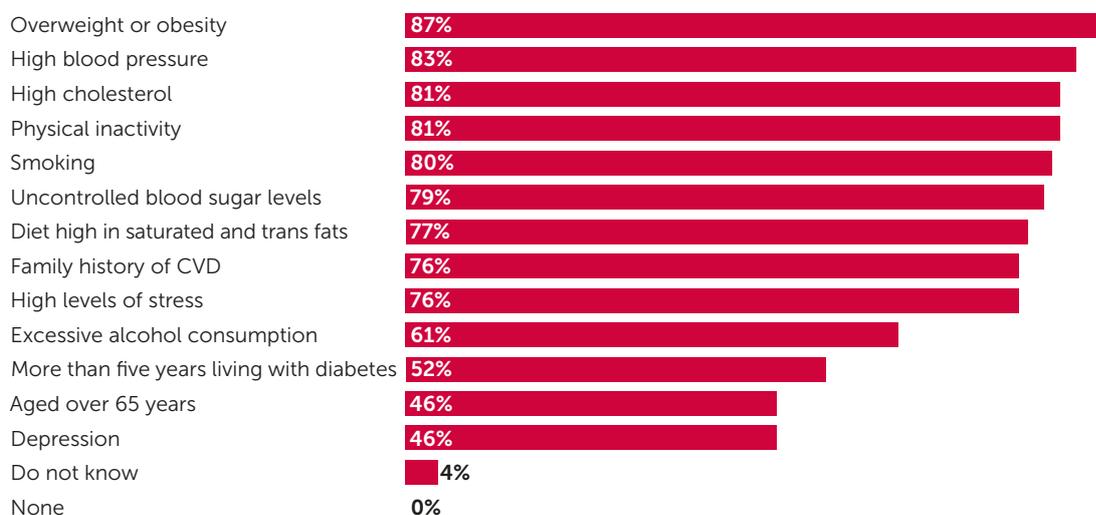
## Knowledge of CVD and risk factors

Participants demonstrated detailed knowledge of the definition of CVD, with the majority correctly identifying heart attack (79%), heart failure (68%), peripheral arterial disease (67%), angina (66%), stroke (63%), and atherosclerosis (62%) as CVD events. A smaller proportion also recognised aortic aneurysm (47%) and brain haemorrhage (41%). Overall, more than 90% of participants correctly identified at least one type of cardiovascular disease (Figure 29).

**Figure 29: Knowledge of CVD – SACA**



**Figure 30: Knowledge of CVD risk factors – SACA**



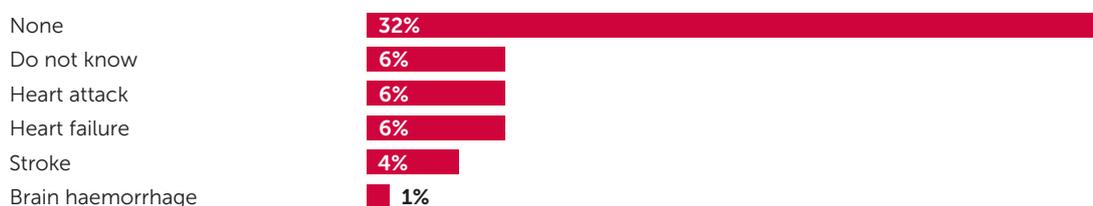
Almost all (95%) of those surveyed could identify some CVD risk factors. The most widely recognised were: overweight or obesity (87%); high blood pressure (83%); high cholesterol (81%); physical inactivity (81%); and smoking (80%). Many also recognised that uncontrolled blood sugar levels (79%) and a diet containing high amounts of saturated and trans fats (77%) were risk factors. Awareness of non-modifiable risk factors was also good, with many participants identifying a family history of CVD (76%); living with T2D for more than five years (52%); and being over 65 (46%) as being important. Other CVD risk factors that were widely recognised included high levels of stress (76%), excessive alcohol consumption (61%) and depression (46%) (Figure 30).

## Awareness of CVD and risk factors

Most respondents (92%) recognised that they had some personal risk of developing CVD. Over two thirds (72%) categorised themselves as being somewhat at risk; at moderate risk; or at high risk for CVD. A further 28% classed themselves as either 'low risk' or 'no risk'.

Participants commonly identified lifestyle-related factors as increasing their risk of developing CVD. These included physical inactivity (63%) and being overweight or obese (60%). A family history of CVD (60%), as well as having lived with a diagnosis of diabetes for more than five years (57%), were also widely cited. A majority of people (57%) felt that high levels of stress was a risk factor for them. Maintaining healthy blood sugar levels was a challenge for 44% of participants, while 42% had difficulty managing their blood pressure and a further 40% said that achieving a healthy cholesterol level was difficult. Thirty-one percent noted that their diet contained high amounts of saturated and trans fats. Just over a quarter (26%) had depression, 17% smoked, and 10% consumed alcohol excessively. Among those who responded, 38% had not experienced a CVD event, or were not sure if they had. Heart attack (6%) and heart failure (6%) were the most frequently mentioned CVD events experienced (Figure 31).

**Figure 31: Experienced CVD events – SACA**



## Education about CVD

When asked if they had had a conversation with a health professional about diabetes and CVD risk factors, 29% of participants either responded that they had never had one, or were not sure if they had. Only 9% stated that they had had several conversations about the risk factors. Of those who had discussed risk factors with a health professional, 16% had done so prior to their diabetes diagnosis; 21% at the time of diagnosis; and 13% soon after. Three percent first spoke with a health professional about T2D and CVD risk factors at the time of their CVD diagnosis, or soon after.

More than half (51%) had spoken to a health professional about CVD risk factors within the previous six months. A further 23% had talked to a health professional about their CVD risk more than six months previously. Finally, 26% reported that they were either not sure or had never had a conversation with a health professional about CVD risk factors.

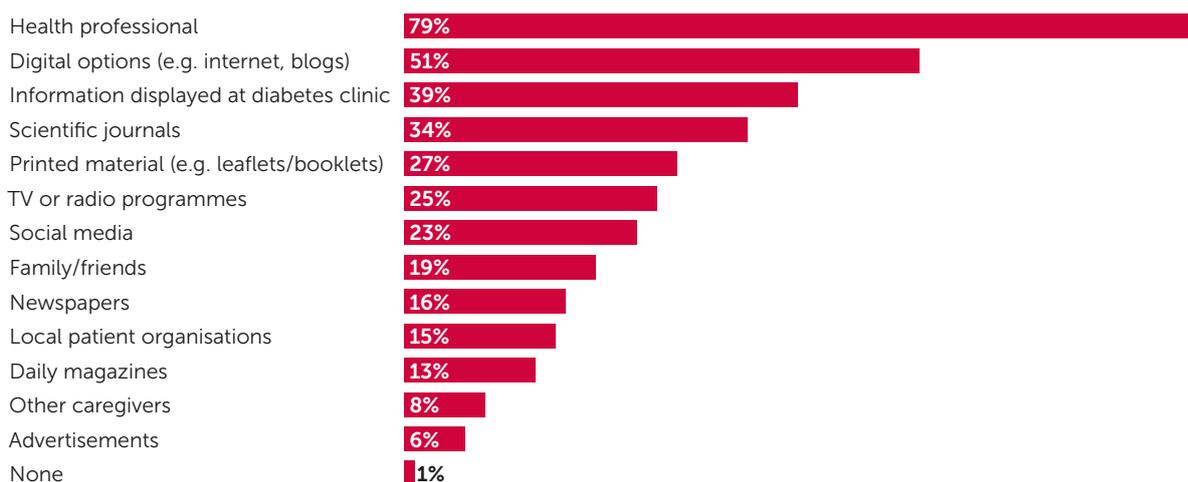
A majority of respondents (67%) recognised that having diabetes increased their CVD risk, even if they took their medications as prescribed. Almost all (97%) were aware that a healthy diet and physical exercise could lower their CVD risk. Most respondents (95%) recognised that CVD affects people of all ages. Recognising that CVD risk is often lifestyle-driven, 86% acknowledged that there were steps they could take to reduce it. The same proportion appreciated that people of all weights can be at risk of CVD, while 89% were aware that stress was associated with a higher risk of CVD.

When asked what information they needed to better understand the risks associated with type 2 diabetes and CVD, 74% felt that tips for reducing risk through diet and exercise would be useful. Over two thirds (71%) wanted both general information on CVD and education on risk factors, while a slightly smaller proportion (60%) felt that information on diabetes self-management would be useful.

## Information about CVD

The majority of respondents (79%) relied on a health professional for information on CVD, while 51% chose digital options. Just over a third (39%) relied on information displayed at their clinic, while 34% selected scientific journals as their preferred information source (Figure 32).

**Figure 32: CVD information sources on which the participants rely – SACA**



Information about CVD obtained from health professionals was associated with the highest rates of satisfaction among 36% of respondents, followed by information displayed at clinics (25%) and scientific journals (24%). Participants were least satisfied with caregivers (47%), advertisements (47%), daily magazines (45%), local patient organisations (42%) and newspapers (39%) as sources of information on CVD.