

## Diabetes - A Pandemic Disease



Diabetes mellitus is a silent killer disease of this century. The prevalence of type 2 diabetes is increasing alarmingly worldwide, making it one of the most common non-communicable disease globally. The number of people with diabetes is increasing due to genetic factors, population growth, aging, urbanization and increasing prevalence of obesity and physical inactivity. The age of onset of diabetes is also decreasing, giving rise to an increasing proportion of young people of working age being affected by the disease. In addition to this, many people destined to develop type 2 diabetes spend many years in a prediabetic state. At present, the prevalence of these prediabetic are much more than the full-blown diabetic persons and have become one of the most challenging health problems throughout the world. In addition to the personal expenses, these chronic metabolic disorders places a huge financial burden on health economies on a national level.

Diabetes continues to cause suffering through its complications. It is now commonly recognized as a "Coronary heart disease risk equivalent". The major cause of heart attack, stroke, lower limb amputation, kidney failure and blindness is uncontrolled diabetes. Good glycemic control remains the basis in the treatment of diabetes and plays a pivotal role in preventing or delaying the onset and progression of diabetic complications. Therefore diabetes must be managed aggressively after its diagnosis. In general, when lifestyle modification and metformin with or without other oral antidiabetic drugs fail to maintain target glycemic control, particularly HbA1c, timely initiation of insulin is a recommended strategy. Every patient must be counseled about the natural history of diabetes. It should be emphasized to the patient that type 2 diabetes is a progressive disease in which beta - cell function continually declines and eventually fails, ultimately requiring insulin therapy nearly to all patients to achieve proper glycemic goals. In addition to control of blood glucose, other cardiovascular risk factors, such as obesity (especially abdominal), hypertension, and dyslipidemia should be regularly checked and treated accordingly.

As diabetes is a global pandemic posing a serious threat to the global health, prevention of the disease is very important. Though some of the risk factors of the disease - such as age, ethnic background or family history can not be changed but many cases can be prevented or the onset delayed through positive lifestyle changes. Exercise and healthy food can either reduce or delay the incidence of diabetes by over 50%. Exercise in the form of "Brisk Walking" is suitable for all ages. It is the best form of moderate intensity isotonic aerobic exercise. The recommended duration of exercise is  $\geq 150$  minutes per week or at the least 30 minutes per day on a 5 day weekly basis. Foods with low glycemic index protects against diabetes.

### References :

1. Textbook of Diabetes - Richard I.G. Hoit
2. American Diabetes Association

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