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Type 2 diabetes linked to shorter lifespan across society, study suggests

Type 2 diabetes is linked to lower life expectancy regardless of a person's socioeconomic status, a Scotland-wide study suggests.

The research, involving more than three million people, could help scientists understand more about the effects of Type 2 diabetes on lifespan. It could inform public health campaigns aimed at tackling the condition.

The comprehensive study is the first study of its kind to get a snapshot of Type 2 diabetes and life expectancy in a national population.

The chronic condition – in which the body is unable to control sugars in the blood – is linked to obesity and is more likely to be diagnosed in older people.

A research team – led by the University of Edinburgh – compared anonymised health records of more than 250,000 people with Type 2 diabetes with 2.8 million people without the condition in Scotland.

Life expectancy data were generated in five-year age bands for men and women aged 40-89 years across 2012-2014.

To understand the effect of socioeconomic status, the researchers looked at the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – based on 38 indicators of deprivation – in every geographical area of Scotland.

Life expectancy was shown to be lower in the Type 2 diabetes group compared with the non-Type 2 diabetic group across almost every age band and at all levels of socioeconomic status. The only exception was men aged over 80 years old in the most deprived category.

Researchers say the differences in life expectancy between Type 2 and non-Type 2 groups ranged from an estimated 5.5 year reduction for women aged 40-44 years to a 0.1 year reduction in life expectancy for men aged 85-89 years.

Around one in 20 people in Scotland have diabetes with 90 per cent of those people living with Type 2. Diabetes is estimated to cost NHS Scotland £1bn per year.

Ranked among the top universities in the world

Sarah Wild, Professor of Epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh's Usher Institute of Population Health Sciences and Informatics, said: "Our study suggests that to improve life-expectancy, we should encourage prevention and management for Type 2 diabetes across all of society.

"Our next steps will be to investigate the relationship between socioeconomic status and factors that could be affecting lifespan, such as heart disease. Although Type 2 diabetes is a serious condition, healthy lifestyle choices can have a positive impact on management."

The study was published in the journal *Diabetologia* and was carried out in collaboration with other Scottish universities and was supported by the Scottish Diabetes Group.

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