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Diabetes Rate May Outpace Predictions

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Global Diabetes Forecast May Be Far Too Low, Study Shows

By [Miranda Hitti](#)
WebMD Medical News

Reviewed by [Louise Chang, MD](#)

March 1, 2007 -- The global diabetes rate may be rising much more quickly than predicted, a Canadian study shows.

The University of Toronto's Lorraine Lipscombe, MD, and Janet Hux, MD, checked data on diabetes prevalence (the percentage of people with diabetes) in Ontario, Canada.

Ontario's diabetes prevalence rose nearly 6% annually between 1995 and 2005. By 2005, Ontario's diabetes prevalence was nearly 9%; that's a rise of 69% from a decade earlier.

That's a much faster growth rate than predicted by the World Health Organization (WHO).

"This rise has already exceeded the 60% global increase and the 65% Canadian increase that were projected [by the WHO] to occur in the 35 years from 1995 to 2030," write Lipscombe and Hux.

"If similar trends are occurring throughout developed countries, then the size of the emerging diabetes epidemic is far greater than anticipated," they write.

The WHO based its diabetes prediction on what Lipscombe and Hux call "the unwarranted assumption that obesity rates would remain constant." Obesity is becoming more common in many countries and is a diabetes risk factor.

"Rising rates of obesity could be a cause of this striking growth," the researchers write. They also note that people with diabetes are living longer, at least in Ontario.

They caution that Ontario may not be the best indicator of the world's diabetes growth rate. Ontario has had a surge in immigration from south Asia and other areas where people are at higher risk of diabetes.

SOURCE: Lipscombe, L. *The Lancet*, March 3, 2007; vol 369: pp 750-756.

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