

Death risk high in type 2 diabetes youth

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YOUNG people with type 2 diabetes are twice as likely to die from the disease as those with type 1 diabetes, according to Australian research.

Records of 815 patients with type 1 or type 2 diabetes diagnosed between 15 and 30 years of age from the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Diabetes Clinical Database were matched with the Australian National Death Index.

Co-author and director of the Diabetes Centre Dr Ted Wu said the higher mortality risk among those with type 2 diabetes was primarily linked to increased cardiovascular risk.

“The presence of less favourable cardiovascular risk factors and higher prevalence of macrovascular disease evident in the type 2 diabetes cohort is a contributing factor in the survival outcomes,” the authors wrote.

“These more adverse risk factors seen at the last visit were also evident even as early as two to five years from diagnosis.



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The constellation of higher BMI, dyslipidaemia, blood pressure and urine albumin creatinine ratio, all seen in the 20-year age group, is alarming, particularly in the context of the patients’ youth.

“This study highlights young-onset type 2 diabetes as a high-risk phenotype requiring intensive intervention directed not only toward the treatment of glycaemia, but also toward cardiovascular risk

factors that often are concurrent early in the course of diabetes.”

Dr Wu suggested the difference in interventions required for the two types of the disease resulted in type 1 diabetes being approached with greater concern.

“It has been assumed that type 1 diabetes has been the more serious phenotype... but we have to treat [type 2 diabetes] seriously.

“It is not just a case of, ‘well

this person is a little overweight or obese, all we have to do is get them to lose a bit of weight’.

“It is much more than that. It is all about the fact that these people really do have a very high risk of mortality if we do not treat them properly. Just because they are on tablets or maybe even a diet and exercise regime does not mean that they don’t have a serious disease,” he said.

Rising rates of type 2 diabetes rates in younger people made proper management an increasingly important issue, Dr Wu said.

The publication of the study coincided with National Diabetes Week. Diabetes Australia reported that 80% of Australians do not think they are at risk of developing diabetes.

Diabetes Care, online 11 July 2013

Diabetes Week stats

- Young people with type 2 diabetes are twice as likely to die from the disease as those with type 1 diabetes
- 80% of Australians do not think they are in danger of developing diabetes
- 10% of people already have prediabetes or are at high risk
- 97% do not know the major symptoms of diabetes
- 100,000 Australians develop the disease every year at a rate of 280 per day
- \$14.6 billion is spent on the disease each year