

Low blood glucose levels in hospitalized patients linked to increased mortality risk

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In hospitalized patients, low blood sugar—also known as hypoglycemia—is associated with increased short- and long-term mortality risk, according to a new study published in the Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

Mortality risk was higher in insulin-treated patients with moderate hypoglycemia (40-70 mg/dL), compared to patients without insulin treatment with similar glucose values. However, with [severe hypoglycemia](#) (

The study's publication comes as a coalition of diabetes stakeholders issues a strategic and actionable blueprint to address the deadly threat [hypoglycemia](#) poses to people with diabetes.

More than 29 million Americans are living with diabetes and an additional 86 million are at risk for developing the disease, according to the Society's [Endocrine Facts & Figures Report](#). One complication of diabetes, hypoglycemia, occurs most often in people taking medications to manage their blood sugar. These treatments can raise insulin levels too high, which can in turn cause [blood glucose levels](#) to drop too low. Hypoglycemia can be dangerous and, depending on the severity, can lead to various symptoms, including dizziness, confusion, anxiety, seizure or loss of consciousness.

"Hypoglycemia is common among [hospitalized patients](#) with and without [diabetes mellitus](#)," said the study's senior author, Amit Akirov, MD, of Rabin Medical Center in Petah Tikva, Israel. "Our findings suggest that hypoglycemia, whether insulin-related or non-insulin related, is associated with short- and long-term [mortality risk](#)."

This study included nearly 3,000 patients with hypoglycemia, defined as blood glucose levels lower than 70 mg/dl, during hospitalization at a 1,330-bed university-affiliated [medical center](#). Researchers evaluated medical records and the hospital's mortality database to investigate the association between hypoglycemia and mortality in hospitalized patients. They found that for patients with hypoglycemia, 31.9 percent had died at the end of the follow-up period.

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