

Diabetes now affects 23 million U.S. adults

March 30 2018, by E.j. Mundell, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—The latest tally of Americans adults affected by diabetes finds more than 23 million struggle with the blood sugar disease.

Of those, the vast majority—21 million cases— are caused by type 2 diabetes, which is often linked to overweight or obesity, according to the [report](#) from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Another 1.3 million cases are attributed to type 1 diabetes, an autoimmune disorder where the body fails to produce enough of the [blood sugar](#) hormone insulin.

The number of [diabetes patients](#) is now "nearly 10 percent of the entire [adult] population," noted Dr. Robert Courgi, a diabetes specialist at Northwell Health's Southside Hospital in Bay Shore, N.Y.

"As expected, the overwhelming majority is type 2 diabetes—usually caused by obesity and treated with pills," added Courgi, who was not involved with the new report.

On the other hand, "type 1 diabetes results in a destruction of the pancreas, is difficult to diagnose and must be treated with insulin," Courgi said. "Type 1 must be recognized quickly and treated appropriately."

The new CDC numbers were based on 2016 data on more than 33,000 adults from the federal government's National Interview Survey. The researchers noted that the 2016 survey was the first to add "supplemental questions to help distinguish diabetes [by] type."

According to the team, led by CDC investigator Kai McKeever Bullard, certain populations seem to be hit harder by either type 1 or type 2 diabetes. For example, the researchers said "white adults had a higher prevalence of diagnosed type 1 diabetes than did Hispanic adults," while "blacks had the highest prevalence of diagnosed type 2 diabetes."

While type 2 diabetes affected about 8 percent of white adults, that

number rose to 9 percent of Hispanics and 11.5 percent of blacks, the report found.

Overall, diabetes prevalence rose with advancing age but fell as levels of education and income improved.

There were also about 800,000 cases of other forms of diabetes, such as a "latent" form of [autoimmune diabetes](#) that only emerges in adults, according to the study.

Dr. Caroline Messer is an endocrinologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. She said the new report is valuable because it helps "delineate the prevalence of type 1 versus type 2 diabetes in [adults](#) in the United States."

Messer said that research funding for the type 1 form of the disease has been somewhat neglected, since so many more people suffer from type 2.

But the release of these new numbers might help change that.

"While therapies for type 2 diabetes are entering the marketplace at a rapid-fire pace, hopefully this report will reinforce the importance of continued research into [type 1] autoimmune [diabetes](#) treatments," Messer said.

The findings were published March 30 in the CDC journal *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

More information: Robert Courgi, M.D., endocrinologist, Northwell Health's Southside Hospital, Bay Shore, N.Y.; Caroline Messer, M.D., endocrinologist, Lenox Hill Hospital, New York City; March 30, 2018, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*

Find out about the warning signs of diabetes at the [American Diabetes Association](#).

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