

Questions over drug trials in developing countries

A paper in the *British Medical Journal* by an emeritus professor of diabetes in the UK has accused producers of insulin and other medications of carrying out drug trials to increase sales in developing countries. Although not required by licensing authorities, post-marketing studies are often carried out in order to determine the performance of a medication without the close monitoring of a clinical trial.

Prof Edwin Gale looked at the post-marketing trials of analogue insulins, which are markedly more expensive than the conventional human insulin. According to the report, since 2005, nearly 400 000 people have been recruited into post-marketing trials of analogue insulins, mostly in middle- or lower-income countries. Gale pointed to the unnecessary cost burden placed on people with diabetes and healthcare systems in the developing countries hosting the trials. 'The patient or healthcare system pays for a more expensive agent instead of one that is cheaper and equally effective, and the public is offered misleading claims of comparative merit based on studies of limited scientific value.'

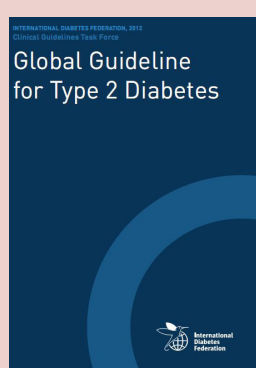
Diabetes, fructose and liver risk

Researchers at the US Johns Hopkins University suspected that high consumption of fructose might provoke liver damage. Obese people with type 2 diabetes who reported high daily consumption of fructose experienced reduced levels of adenosine triphosphate in the liver – reflecting impaired liver function – compared with those who consumed less. The investigators also determined that elevated uric acid may serve as a marker of impaired liver function following consumption of fructose in people with type 2 diabetes.

The researchers underlined the urgent need for increased public awareness of the risks related to high fructose consumption.

New Global Guideline for type 2 diabetes

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and the Clinical Guidelines Task Force have launched the second edition of the *Global Guideline for Type 2 Diabetes*.



The only global guideline of its kind, this edition features new and revised information on:

- type 2 management in older people;
- algorithms for people with type 2 diabetes;
- glucose control therapy and lifestyle management.

Available shortly in hard copy, the book can be downloaded at <http://www.idf.org/>.

Diabetes Association of Malawi working hard in face of diabetes epidemic

Diabetes is a serious and growing problem in Malawi. While the World Health Organization estimates the prevalence among adults globally to be 5.6%, in Malawi it is around 15% of the adult population.

The Diabetes Association of Malawi is a young organisation that is working hard to warn the health authorities, political leaders, and the general population of the grave threat to development, as well as health and wellbeing, posed by an epidemic of type 2 diabetes.

Don't just sit there

Sitting for long periods increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease and death, researchers suggest. The scientists from Leicester and Loughborough Universities in the UK say harm is done even if people also exercise.

The study, published in *Diabetologia*, analysed 18 existing studies involving almost 800 000 people.

Each of the studies they assessed used different measures – for example more or less than 14 hours a week watching TV, or self-reported sitting time of less than 3 hours a day to more than 8.

There is evidence that being sedentary negatively affects glucose levels and increases insulin resistance – but scientists do not yet know how.

Diabetes link to breast cancer in post-menopausal women

Post-menopausal women who have type 2 diabetes appear to have a 27% greater risk of developing breast cancer, experts say.

An international team, writing in the *British Journal of Cancer*, examined 40 separate studies looking at the potential link between breast cancer and diabetes.

Being obese or overweight is linked to both conditions, but cancer experts say there may be a direct connection between the two. These studies involved more than 56 000 women with breast cancer.

Although post-menopausal women with type 2 diabetes had a 27% increased risk of breast cancer, there was no link for pre-menopausal women or those with type 1 diabetes.

The authors have also suggested that a high body mass index (BMI), which is often associated with diabetes, may be an underlying contributing factor.

