

Death rates among people with type 2 diabetes have declined in many countries including Australia

UNDER EMBARGO: 10.30am AEDT Tuesday 11 January 2022

People with type 2 diabetes are living longer, with a new study suggesting that health management strategies developed in recent decades may be working.

The global study of 16 high-income countries, led by researchers at the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, showed that death rates for people with type 2 diabetes are declining. The strongest declines were seen in the Asian jurisdictions included – Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore.

The study, [published in *The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology*](#), also showed that the life expectancy gap between people with diabetes and those without the disease is narrowing in about half of the jurisdictions that were assessed, including Singapore, the US, Canada, Denmark, and Hong Kong.

The study examined 21 million deaths in people with diagnosed diabetes in 16 high-income countries from 1995 to 2016.

Baker Institute lead authors, Head of Diabetes and Population Health Professor Dianna Magliano OAM and Deputy Director, Clinical and Population Health, Professor Jonathan Shaw, said the findings suggest that diabetes care continues to improve over time, at least in the high-income countries represented in this study.

The findings follow a [global study published last year](#), also led by Professor Magliano and Professor Shaw, which showed annual rates of new cases of adults diagnosed with type 2 diabetes (diabetes incidence) is stable or falling in many high-income countries.

Professor Magliano said both findings were reason for cautious optimism, but that further increases to life expectancy would require continued improvement in the prevention and management of diabetes.

“Mortality rates are an important indicator of access to quality healthcare. Our findings suggest that we may be starting to reap the benefits of better education and disease management programs,” she said.

“Population-level health promotion on tobacco cessation and lifestyle modification certainly has led to reductions in levels of some risk factors, including smoking, high blood pressure and cholesterol.

“In addition, the use of blood pressure and cholesterol lowering medications for the prevention of cardiovascular disease in people with diabetes has increased in the last decades. This is critical because cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death in people with type 2 diabetes.

“There have also been significant advances in medical interventions and care for individuals with acute cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke.”

Professor Shaw said: “There is still a long way to go to control the many risks associated with diabetes, but these findings provide promising evidence that we are moving in the right direction.”

This study included data sources from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Hong Kong, Hungary, Israel, Italy (Lombardy), Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Scotland, Singapore, South Korea, Spain (Catalonia), Taiwan, and the US.

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