

Psychosocial burden of diabetes revealed in 2016 MILES-2 Survey Report

Monday, December 19, 2016: People living with diabetes experience significant levels of diabetes distress and often feel stigmatised. A new report has been released today by the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes (ACBRD) exploring what it is like to live with and manage diabetes. The Diabetes MILES*-2 Report provides the second snapshot in 5 years highlighting unmet psychosocial needs of Australian adults living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. The first report, the Diabetes MILES – Australia Survey Report, was launched in 2011.

Professor Jane Speight, Foundation Director of the ACBRD, said the MILES-2 findings were strikingly consistent with the results of the first Diabetes MILES – Australia survey. “The prevalence of depressive symptoms and diabetes-specific distress are largely comparable with the rates we observed in 2011.”

“In addition to the unmet psychological needs of people living with diabetes, this new survey reveals that Australian adults with diabetes face social challenges, including diabetes-related stigma, and a lack of social support for their diabetes self-management and coping.”

Dr Adriana Ventura, Research Fellow at the ACBRD and lead author of the Diabetes MILES-2 Report said: “We found only one in ten people were participating in peer support programs or initiatives – this was the same rate we observed in 2011. More effort is needed to connect people with peer support groups, particularly online communities, as many people with diabetes appear to prefer this mode of delivery.”

The report also noted the self-management behaviours (particularly healthy eating and physical activity) of the respondents were comparable to the 2011 survey.

“The healthy eating and physical activity findings are very similar to those for the general Australian adult population, but people living with diabetes have an even greater imperative to engage in healthy behaviours as they are a critical part of an optimal self-management regimen for the prevention or delay of diabetes-related complications,” added Dr Ventura.

Key highlights of the report:

Psychological and Emotional Aspects of Diabetes

- Moderate-to-severe depressive symptoms affected:
 - 36% of adults with insulin-treated type 2 diabetes;
 - 24% of adults with type 1 diabetes; and
 - 21% of adults with non-insulin-treated type 2 diabetes.
- Severe diabetes distress was experienced by:
 - 24% of adults with type 1 diabetes;

- 20% of adults with insulin-treated type 2 diabetes; and
- 11% of adults with non-insulin-treated type 2 diabetes.

Social Aspects of Diabetes

- Diabetes-related stigma was common among all respondents. This involved the perception and/or experience of being blamed, negatively judged or being treated unfairly due to having/managing diabetes.
- 89% of respondents are not currently part of a peer support group or community and have never been in the past. 38% of these indicated they would like to be in the future.

Behavioural Aspects of Diabetes

- Only 25% of adults had followed a healthful eating plan on all of the past seven days, and only 17% had participated in at least 30 minutes of physical activity on all seven days.
- 37% of respondents had attended a group education program for their diabetes at some point.

Approximately 1.7 million Australians are currently living with diabetes.

*We **support, empower and campaign** for all Victorians affected by diabetes.*

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Notes to editors:

- The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes is a partnership for better health between Diabetes Victoria and Deakin University.
- The first Diabetes MILES Study was a national survey of the psychosocial health and well-being of 3,338 Australian adults with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. It was conducted in 2011 by the ACBRD, with funding from the National Diabetes Services Scheme. The report is available at: <https://static.diabetesaustralia.com.au/s/fileassets/diabetes-australia/4e052ae5-2d13-421e-b6f8-5e323b5c48a6.pdf>. For more information about Diabetes MILES, see: www.diabetesmiles.org.au
- The Second Diabetes MILES – Australia (MILES-2) Survey was conducted in 2015 and 2,342 adults with type 1 or type 2 diabetes took part. The MILES-2 survey enabled comparison with the 2011 findings and a focus on some new issues, such as diabetes stigma. The report is available here <http://diabetesmiles.org.au/>. The survey content focused on three aspects of living with diabetes: psychological, social and behavioural.