

Wednesday 5 July 2017

National Diabetes Week 2017: Survey points to diabetes as an Invisible Condition

In the lead up to *National Diabetes Week* (9–15 July), a new diabetes awareness survey conducted by Diabetes Victoria highlights the urgent need for Victorians to learn more about this *Invisible Condition*. While every second respondent (56.4%) could not identify the correct number of Victorians developing diabetes every day, one in five respondents (19.8%) actually believed they were not at risk of developing this relentless condition.

"Diabetes does not discriminate. People from all walks of life can develop diabetes – they come in all shapes, sizes, ages, gender identities and ethnicities," says Diabetes Victoria CEO: Craig Bennett, who points out that every day more than 80 Victorians develop diabetes. Latest figures show that 314,000 Victorians have been diagnosed with one of the three main types of diabetes. In addition, Diabetes Victoria estimates that a further 125,000 Victorians don't know that they have type 2 diabetes. A further 500,000 Victorians are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

"This is why our new digital awareness campaign for this year's *National Diabetes Week* highlights that diabetes is an *Invisible Condition*," Mr Bennett says. "You cannot see if somebody is at risk of developing diabetes. Many people at risk do not have 'warning signs', helping them to understand that something is amiss. Likewise, you cannot see if somebody already has diabetes, nor can you tell which type of diabetes they have. Diabetes is truly an *Invisible Condition*."

Diabetes Victoria has launched a new campaign website: invisiblecondition.org.au where Victorians can learn more about diabetes. A 30-second video visualises the growing number of people affected by this *Invisible Condition* – which flies under the radar of the general public.

"We need to continue to stress the seriousness of this *Invisible Condition*, which can lead to many health complications," Mr Bennett says. "Living with diabetes is 24/7. We all need to know more about diabetes and we'd like to share how Diabetes Victoria can help. Many Australians are at risk – you don't have to be old and you don't have to be overweight to develop diabetes."

Key highlights from the Diabetes Victoria survey:

- In late May, more than 500 Victorians participated in the Diabetes Victoria awareness survey. Of those, 37.8% were living with diabetes, 52% had a friend or family member living with diabetes and only 10.2% were neither living with nor knew somebody else living with diabetes.
- Over half of respondents (56.4%) did not know that 80 Victorians develop diabetes each and every day.
- Almost half of all respondents (46%) did not know or were unsure if they were at risk of developing diabetes.
- Many respondents correctly identified that a family history can significantly increase the risk of developing diabetes (95%).

- More than two out of three respondents (72%) believed that diabetes can be caused if people eat too much sugar. This belief is incorrect and one of the many myths and misconceptions surrounding this complex condition.

“There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes,” says Mr Bennett. “Each type of diabetes has different underlying causes and may be best managed with different strategies. However, once you develop diabetes, you will have to manage the condition every day for the rest of your life. There is a great need to raise awareness about this, in particular.”

Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic condition in Australia. Around 1.7 million Australians have diabetes. This includes all types of diagnosed diabetes, as well as *silent* or undiagnosed type 2 diabetes. More than 108,000 Australians have developed diabetes in the past year alone.

Visit the website invisiblecondition.org.au to learn more about the campaign and Diabetes Victoria’s programs and services.

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

For more information:

Jane Kneebone, 0416 148 845, jkneebone@diabetesvic.org.au

Sybille Taylor, 0408 102 344, staylor@diabetesvic.org.au

Further information:***National Diabetes Week 2017***

National Diabetes Week is celebrated in the second week of July each year. It is an opportunity to raise awareness about the seriousness of diabetes and its prevalence in Australia. This year, *National Diabetes Week* is from Sunday 9 to Saturday 15 July.

Diabetes Victoria

Diabetes Victoria’s *Invisible Condition* campaign is directed at all people affected by, or at risk of, diabetes. Diabetes Victoria has produced a 30-second video highlighting the fact that diabetes is an *Invisible Condition* which affects people from all walks of life.

Background

Our campaign aims to raise awareness of all types of diabetes and highlights the invisible nature of diabetes; why diabetes is too important to ignore; how people can take a stand; and how they can make their mark by asking their local Member of Parliament to provide more funding for diabetes research – which may lead to a cure.

Diabetes Victoria is calling on all Victorians to support this campaign to help raise awareness of diabetes during *National Diabetes Week 2017*. Visit the website invisiblecondition.org.au to learn more.