

ADDRESSING THE DIABETES EPIDEMIC IN PAKISTAN: A CALL TO ACTION

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Introduction: Diabetes has emerged as a global health crisis, affecting millions worldwide and imposing a significant burden on healthcare systems. In Pakistan, the prevalence of diabetes has reached alarming levels, posing serious challenges to public health and socioeconomic development. This editorial highlights the escalating diabetes epidemic in Pakistan and emphasizes the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address this growing threat.

Magnitude of the Problem: Pakistan is facing a diabetes epidemic of unprecedented scale. According to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), Pakistan ranks among the top 10 countries with the highest prevalence of diabetes, with an estimated 19.4 million adults living with the condition. Alarming, the prevalence is projected to rise to 26.8 million by 2045 if appropriate measures are not taken.

Contributing Factors: Several factors contribute to the diabetes epidemic in Pakistan, including urbanization, sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy dietary habits, genetic predisposition, and limited access to healthcare services. Urbanization has led to rapid changes in lifestyle, characterized by decreased physical activity, increased consumption of high-calorie processed foods, and higher stress levels, all of which contribute to the rising prevalence of diabetes.

Challenges in Management: The management of diabetes in Pakistan is hindered by various challenges, including inadequate healthcare infrastructure, a shortage of trained healthcare professionals, limited access to affordable medications, and low health literacy among the population. Furthermore, cultural beliefs and stigma surrounding diabetes often deter individuals from seeking timely medical care, leading to poor disease management and complications.

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Call to Action: Addressing the diabetes epidemic in Pakistan requires a multi-faceted approach involving government intervention, community engagement, and collaboration with healthcare stakeholders. Firstly, there is a need for the government to prioritize diabetes prevention and control through the implementation of evidence-based policies and programs. This includes promoting healthy lifestyles, improving access to healthcare services, and investing in diabetes education and awareness campaigns.

Secondly, healthcare providers must be equipped with the necessary resources and training to effectively manage diabetes and its complications. This involves strengthening primary healthcare systems, enhancing diabetes screening and diagnosis, and ensuring the availability of essential medications and supplies.

Thirdly, community engagement plays a crucial role in raising awareness about diabetes prevention and management. Empowering communities to make informed choices about their health, promoting physical activity, and encouraging healthy eating habits are essential steps in combating the diabetes epidemic.

Conclusion: The diabetes epidemic in Pakistan represents a significant public health challenge that demands immediate attention and concerted action. By implementing comprehensive strategies focused on prevention, early detection, and effective management, we can mitigate the impact of diabetes on individuals, families, and society as a whole. Together, we can work towards a future where diabetes no longer poses a threat to the health and well-being of the Pakistani population.

References:

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