
New WHO report highlights the alarming state of global access to insulin and diabetes care

Many people living with diabetes, like Musah from Ghana, struggle without realising they have the condition, especially when services are not always accessible or feasible. Watch mini-film here at ncdalliance.org/facing-forward

100 years after its discovery, insulin still out of reach for many living with diabetes

Geneva, 12 November 2021 – A new report published by WHO in the lead-up to World Diabetes Day on 14 November highlights the alarming state of global access to insulin and diabetes care, and finds that high prices, low availability of human insulin, few producers dominating the insulin market and weak health systems are the main barriers to universal access.

“The scientists who discovered insulin 100 years ago refused to profit from their discovery and sold the patent for just one dollar,” said WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. “Unfortunately, that gesture of solidarity has been overtaken by a multi-billion-dollar business that has created vast access gaps. WHO is working with countries and manufacturers to close these gaps and expand access to this life-saving medicine for everyone who needs it.”

Insulin is the bedrock of diabetes treatment – it turns a deadly disease into a manageable one for nine million people with type 1 diabetes. For more than 60 million people living with type 2 diabetes, insulin is essential in reducing the risk of kidney failure, blindness and limb amputation.

However, one out of every two people needing insulin for type 2 diabetes does not get it. Diabetes is on the rise in low- and middle-income countries, and yet their consumption of insulin has not kept up with the growing disease burden. The report highlights that while three in four people affected by type 2 diabetes live in countries outside of North America and Europe, they account for less than 40% of the revenue from insulin sales.

[Read full press release from the World Health Organization \(WHO\) here](#) [1].

New findings show alarming increase of people living with diabetes worldwide

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) has released new figures showing that 537 million adults are now living with diabetes worldwide — a rise of 16% (74 million) since the previous IDF estimates in 2019. These new figures are taken from the upcoming 10th Edition of the [IDF Diabetes Atlas](#) [2], which will be published on 6 December and highlights the alarming growth in the prevalence of diabetes around the world.

The latest IDF Diabetes Atlas reports that global prevalence of diabetes has reached 10.5%, with almost half (44.7%) of adults undiagnosed. IDF projections show that by 2045, 783 million adults will be living with diabetes – or one in

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eight adults. This would be an increase of 46%, more than double the estimated population growth (20%) over the same period.

"As the world marks the centenary of the discovery of insulin, I wish I could report we have witnessed decisive action to turn the rising tide of diabetes. Alas I cannot," comments IDF President, Professor Andrew Boulton. "Diabetes is a pandemic of unprecedented magnitude."

Learn more at www.worlddiabetesday.org [3]

Post Date: Friday, 12 November, 2021

Tags: [diabetes](#) [4]

[World Diabetes Day](#) [5]

[insulin](#) [6]

[world health organization](#) [7]

[WHO](#) [8]

[Diabetes Atlas 2021](#) [9]

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Links

[1] <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-11-2021-new-who-report-maps-barriers-to-insulin-availability-and-suggests-actions-to-promote-universal-access>

[2] <https://diabetesatlas.org/>

[3] <http://www.worlddiabetesday.org/>

[4] <https://ncdalliance.org/category/tags/diabetes>

[5] <https://ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/288>

[6] <https://ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/1160>

[7] <https://ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/347>

[8] <https://ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/542>

[9] <https://ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/1281>

[10] <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/pressure-points-call-for-simultaneous-action-on-diabetes-and-hypertension-for-more-resilient-health-systems>