
#AHA18: Stress doubles the risk of Type 2 diabetes in women



We are all aware that risk factors like obesity, high blood pressure, and an inactive/sedentary lifestyle can cause Type 2 diabetes. However, new research presented today at the American Heart Association Meeting 2018 in Chicago reveals that stress may also play a role in the development of this condition in women.

Diabetes is a public health issue and affects nearly 30.3 million Americans, 12 million of which are 75 and older. The study presented today at #AHA18 reveals that stress from traumatic events and long-term situations at home or work can result in a two-fold higher risk of Type 2 diabetes among older women.

Dr. Jonathan Butler, a postdoctoral scholar at the University of California, San Francisco's Center for the Study of Adversity and Cardiovascular Disease and lead researcher points out that these findings clearly suggest that psychosocial factors should be taken as seriously as other diabetes risk factors. Older women, in particular, are most vulnerable to it, and that is why it is important to understand the risk factors for this particular patient population.

The study included data on 22,706 female health professionals participating in the Women's Health Study. The average age was 73 years, and none of these women had heart disease. The participants were followed for an average of three years. Information was collected for acute stressors (negative and traumatic life events) and chronic stressors (related to work, family, relationships, finances, neighbourhood, and discrimination). Findings showed that women with the highest level of stress (both acute and chronic) had double the risk for diabetes.

"From a public health perspective, health care providers should inquire about psychosocial stressors as part of their assessment of diabetes risk," said Dr. Michelle A. Albert, the study's senior author and a professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco.

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Published on : Sat, 10 Nov 2018