

Understanding the Serious Complications and Emergencies of Diabetes

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Opinion Article

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DESCRIPTION

A collection of common endocrine illnesses known as diabetes, sometimes known as diabetes mellitus, are characterised by persistently elevated blood sugar levels. Diabetes results from either insufficient insulin production by the pancreas or improper insulin use by body cells. Diabetes can cause a number of health issues if it is not treated. An estimated 1.5 million fatalities annually are attributed to untreated or inadequately controlled diabetes.

The majority of diabetes cases have no generally recognised treatment. Instances of type 1 diabetes are typically treated with insulin replacement therapy (insulin injections). Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or treated with lifestyle changes and anti-diabetic drugs like semaglutide and metformin. Normal resolution of gestational diabetes occurs soon after delivery. Unplanned weight loss, polyuria, polydipsia, and polyphagia are all typical indicators of untreated diabetes. Type 1 diabetes symptoms can appear suddenly, however type 2 diabetes symptoms typically appear much more gradually and may even be non-existent.

Although they are not specific to the disease, a number of additional signs and symptoms can indicate the beginning of diabetes. These also include itching skin, impaired vision, headaches, and weariness in addition to the previously mentioned symptoms. Long-term high blood sugar levels can cause the lens of the eye to absorb glucose, changing its shape and impairing vision. Diabetic retinopathy can potentially result in long-term vision loss.

Diabetic emergencies

Diabetes patients may also have Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA), a metabolic disorder characterised by nausea, vomiting, and stomach discomfort as well as the acetone odour on the breath, Kussmaul breathing, and in extreme cases, a lowered level of consciousness (typically but not exclusively in type 1 diabetes). DKA necessitates hospital emergency

care. Hyperosmolar Hyperglycemic State (HHS), which is more frequent in type 2 diabetes and mostly brought on by dehydration brought on by high blood sugars, is a more uncommon but severe illness.

Both type 1 and type 2 diabetics may experience hypoglycemia, a low blood sugar brought on by treatment, depending on the medication being taken. Most incidents are modest and not life-threatening. Uncomforted, trembling, sweating, and an increase in appetite are all possible mild symptoms. In severe cases, however, symptoms may include confusion, violent behaviour changes, seizures, unconsciousness, and, very rarely, permanent brain damage or death. Low blood sugar is characterised by rapid breathing, perspiration, and cold, pale skin, but these symptoms are not absolute. Self-treatment for mild to severe cases involves consuming foods or beverages that are rich in quickly absorbed carbs. Severe cases, which can cause coma, need to be treated with intravenous glucose or glucagon injections.

Complications

Long-term consequences are more likely in all types of diabetes. They often appear after several years (10-20), however they could be the initial symptom in those who haven't previously been diagnosed. The main long-term issues are related to blood vessel damage. Cardiovascular disease is two times more likely in patients with diabetes, and coronary artery disease accounts for around 75% of their deaths. Stroke and peripheral artery disease are two more macro vascular disorders. Furthermore a significant risk factor for serious COVID-19 sickness.

The main effects of diabetes are damage to the eyes, kidneys, and nerves, which is caused by tiny blood vessel damage. Damage to the blood vessels in the retina of the eye, also known as diabetic retinopathy, can cause gradual vision loss and eventually blindness. Glaucoma, cataracts, and other eye conditions are also more common in people with diabetes. It is advised that diabetics see an ophthalmologist or optometrist once a year. Diabetic nephropathy, or harm to the kidneys, can cause tissue scarring, protein loss in the urine, and leading to chronic kidney disease, which may call for dialysis or kidney transplantation.