

Warning sounded on diabetes stats

PRETORIA: The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) has warned that at least one in 10 adults could have diabetes by 2030. The number of people living with diabetes is expected to rise from 366 million to 552 million by 2030 if no urgent action is taken, according to the federation's latest statistics.

The IDF's fifth edition of the Diabetes Atlas, released during World Diabetes Day on Monday, 14 November 2011, revealed that in some of the poorest regions in the world like Africa, diabetes cases were expected to increase by 90% by 2030.

The release of the figures follows a UN high-level meeting held in New York in September, where 193 heads of state and government agreed on a Political Declaration on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), including diabetes.

In Africa, the figures showed that the number of people living with diabetes has now risen to 14.7 million and was expected to increase by around 90 percent. At least 78 percent of people in Africa living with diabetes are undiagnosed.

Some of Africa's most populous countries, with the highest number of people with diabetes, include Nigeria followed by South Africa.

IDF President Jean Claude Mbanya noted that in every country and community worldwide, they faced a huge battle against disease.

"We want World Diabetes Day 2011 to bring these alarming diabetes facts into the global spotlight. We demand that public and world leaders act on diabetes now," said a concerned Mbanya.

NCD Alliance Chairperson and IDF CEO, Ann Keeling, said world leaders have recognised the magnitude and impact of these diseases and the urgent need for action.

"In some key areas, we wanted stronger commitments and targets but the Declaration will accelerate international progress on diabetes and NCDs, saving millions of people from preventable death and disability."

Silver Bahendeka, chairperson of the IDF's Africa region, said: "In Africa, we need to encourage the strengthening of our national health systems to encourage earlier diagnosis and prevent the onset of later complications, which increase the social and economic burden on already poor areas."

In a bid to reduce the rate of people suffering from NCDs such as diabetes and high blood pressure, South African Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi recently announced that the food industry might in the future be legally bound to reduce the salt content in its products.

The regulation on salt follows the recent approval of the trans fats regulations, where manufactures are expected to reduce the amount of fat in food.

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