

General Information

Background¹

People with diabetes have a shortage of insulin or a decreased ability to use insulin, a hormone that allows glucose (sugar) to enter cells and be converted to energy. When diabetes is not controlled, glucose and fats remain in the blood and, over time, damage vital organs. Diabetes can cause heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, pregnancy complications, the need for lower-extremity amputations. Particularly at risk for these complications are the 5.2 million Americans who are unaware that they have diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes most often occurs during childhood or adolescence. Type 2 diabetes, which is linked to obesity and physical inactivity, accounts for 90% to 95% of diabetes cases and most often occurs among people older than 40. With increasing obesity, type 2 diabetes is now being found at younger ages and is even being diagnosed among children and teens. Gestational diabetes develops in 2% to 5% of all pregnancies, but usually disappears when pregnancy is over. Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States.

Risk Factors²

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include:

- Older age
- Family history of diabetes
- Impaired glucose tolerance
- Race/ethnicity
- Obesity
- Prior history of gestational diabetes
- Physical inactivity

Risk factors are less well defined for type 1 diabetes than for type 2 diabetes, but autoimmune, genetic and environmental factors are involved in the development of this type of diabetes.

Prevention²

A number of studies have shown that regular physical activity can significantly reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Although researchers are making progress in identifying the exact genetics and "triggers" that predispose some individuals to develop type 1 diabetes, prevention, as well as a cure, remain elusive.

Size

San Diego County

Diabetes prevalence in San Diego County for 2001, the most currently available data, is 5.4 persons per 100 population (age-adjusted rate) or an estimated 110,700 persons.³

California

Diabetes prevalence in California for 2001, the most currently available data, is 6.1 persons per 100 population (age-adjusted rate) or an estimated 1,468,100 persons.³

National

More than 18.2 million Americans (6.3% of the population) have diabetes. This includes 13.0 million people diagnosed and 5.2 million people undiagnosed.⁴ The number of U.S. adults with diagnosed diabetes, including women with gestational diabetes (diabetes that develops during pregnancy), has increased by 61% since 1991 and is projected to more than double by 2050.¹

High-risk Populations⁴

The following populations are at higher risk for diabetes:

Race/ethnicity

- African Americans—11.4% of all non-Hispanic African Americans aged 20 years or older have diabetes. On average, African Americans are 1.6 times as likely to have diabetes than whites of similar age.
- Hispanic and Latino Americans—8.2% of all Hispanics aged 20 years or older have diabetes. On average, Hispanics are 1.5 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites of similar age. Mexican Americans are over twice as likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites of similar age.
- American Indians and Alaska Natives—14.9 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives age 20 years or older who receive care from the Indian Health Service have diabetes.

Age

- Adults aged 60 and older—18.3 percent of all people in this age group have diabetes.

Healthy People 2010 Objective 5-3: Reduce the overall rate of diabetes that is clinically diagnosed to 25 cases per 1,000 population.⁵

Seriousness

Mortality

Now the sixth leading cause of death in America, diabetes is responsible for over 200,000 deaths each year.¹ In 2002, the national age-adjusted death rate for diabetes was 22.7 per 100,000 population, up from 22.0 deaths per 100,000 population in 2001.¹

San Diego County⁶

- In San Diego County, the diabetes-related mortality rate has decreased from 19.2 per 100,000 population in 2000 to 18.2 in 2002, a 5.2% decrease.
- Among individuals aged 65 to 74, the diabetes mortality rate is 73.9 per 100,000 population. Among individuals aged 75 to 84, this rate increases to 145.9. For those aged 85 and over, this rate is 231.3.
- Diabetes is the eighth leading cause of death in San Diego County.

Health Care Impacts of Diabetes

Diabetes poses a significant public health challenge for the United States. Each year an estimated 800,000 new cases are diagnosed, equating to 2,200 per day.³ Diabetes-related complications that could be prevented or reduced include:

- Eye disease and blindness—affecting 12,000 to 24,000 people in the U.S. annually.¹
- Kidney failure—approximately 42,813 people with diabetes develop kidney failure each year, and over 100,000 are treated for this condition.¹
- Amputations—approximately 82,000 people have diabetes-related leg, foot or toe amputations each year.¹
- Heart disease and stroke—these conditions cause about 65% of deaths among people with diabetes.¹
- Gestational diabetes—approximately 18,000 women with pre-existing diabetes and about 135,000 women with gestational diabetes give birth each year. These women and their babies are at an increased risk for serious complications such as stillbirths, congenital malformations and cesarean sections. Women with gestational diabetes and their babies are also at higher risk for becoming obese and developing diabetes later in life.⁴
- Each year, 10,000–30,000 people with diabetes die of complications from flu or pneumonia.⁴

The age-adjusted rate of hospitalization for persons with diabetes among San Diego County residents in 2002 was 111.8 persons per 100,000 population.⁷ Since 2001 in San Diego County, Hispanics and African Americans have diabetes-related hospitalization rates 1.9 and 2.5 times higher than that of the overall population.⁷

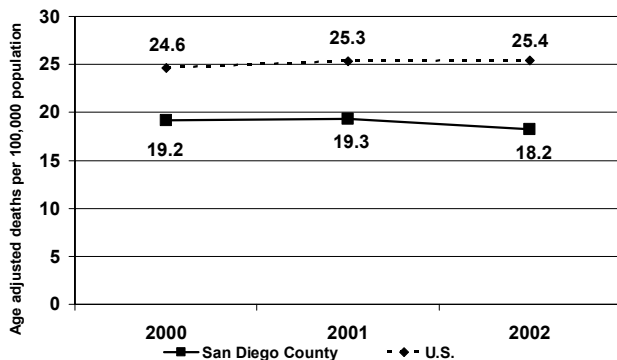
- Diabetes-related hospitalization rates for persons living in the Central, South and East regions of San Diego County have been dramatically higher than for those living in other regions of the County over the past three years.⁷
- Mortality and hospitalization rates for 2002 indicate a sharp increase in both death and hospitalizations among persons with diabetes as they age.⁶

Economic Costs of Diabetes

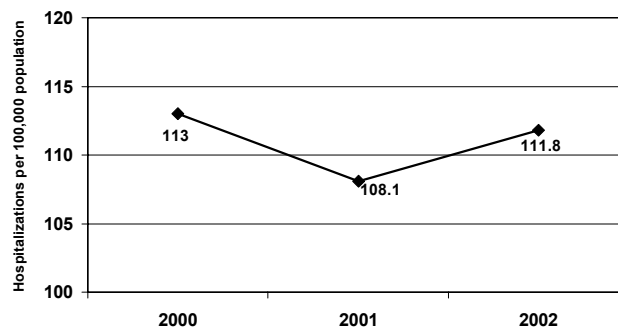
Diabetes costs the nation nearly \$132 billion a year—\$92 billion in direct medical costs and another \$40 billion in indirect costs due to lost productivity. The average annual health care cost for a person with diabetes was \$13,243 in 2002, compared with \$2,560 for a person without diabetes. Diabetes costs represented 11% of national health care expenditures during 2002.¹

Seriousness (continued)

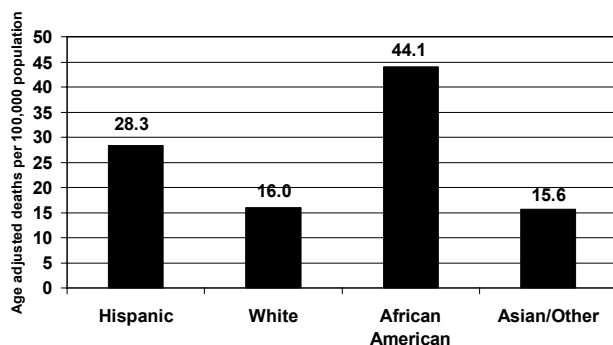
Diabetes Related Mortality Rates 2000 – 2002^{6,8,9}



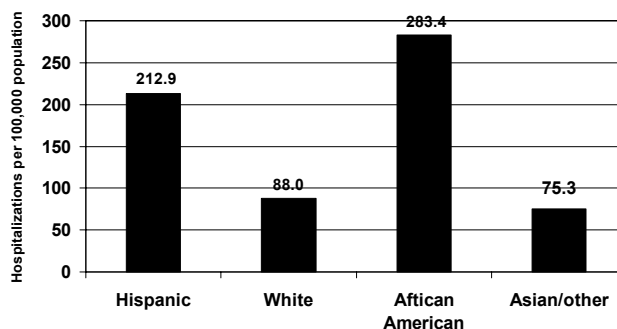
Diabetes Related Hospitalization Rates San Diego County 2000 – 2002⁶



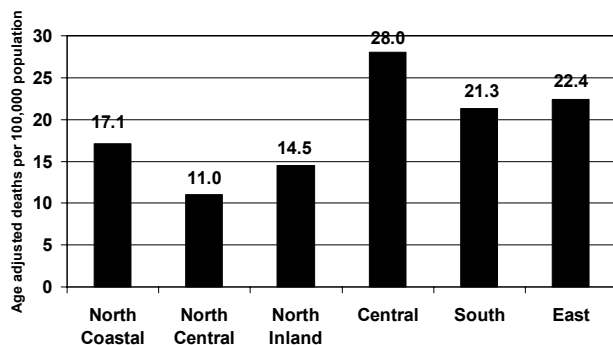
Diabetes Related Mortality Rates San Diego County 2002⁶ By Race/Ethnicity



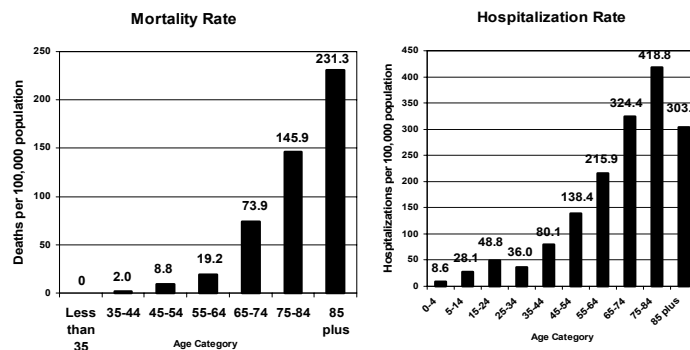
Diabetes Related Hospitalization Rates San Diego County 2002⁷ by Race/ethnicity



Diabetes Related Mortality Rates San Diego County 2002⁶ By Region



Diabetes Related Rates San Diego County 2002^{6,7} By Age Category



Community Concern

Focus Group Discussion Points

Diabetes was not identified as a primary concern by focus group participants.

Key Informant Scoring

Overall, key informants scored diabetes fifth most important out of 14 health issues considered.

*Please note that focus groups and key informant surveys are qualitative in nature and findings presented may not be representative of a larger population.

References

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9. Kochanek KD, Smith BL. Deaths: Final data for 2001. National vital statistics reports: vol 52 no 13. Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics. 2004.