



Experts put diabetes under the spotlight

By the time we reach the age of 60 -65, many of us are likely to become diabetic. This is the message from scientists and health experts taking part in a major health symposium at the University of Central Lancashire.

Diabetes mellitus is a global health problem currently affecting more than 180 million people worldwide. The total number of people in the world with diabetes is expected to reach 220 million in 2010 and more than 300 million by 2025. In the United Kingdom more than 2 million people are diagnosed as diabetics and another 1½ - 2 million diabetics have not yet been diagnosed (approximately 3% of the British population). It costs the British National Health Service over 5½ billion pounds annually to diagnose, treat and care for diabetic patients. This is an enormous burden for both the sufferers and the Health Service. Ageing, obesity and ethnicity are special risk factors.

Preston will be the host City for the 4th International Symposium on Diabetes Mellitus, which will focus on the global issues surrounding diabetes and its complications. Delegates and representatives from all over the world including Lancashire Teaching (NHS) Trust will be joining colleagues at the University of Central Lancashire on the 7th and 8th July, in order to take an active part in the exchange of ideas and knowledge of all areas of type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus.

The Symposium will be structured in the form of guest lectures by distinguished clinicians and researchers, diabetes questions, and oral and poster presentations. A range of issues from epidemiology, diagnosis, treatment, prevention and complications will be covered and there will also be a special day-long session on Tuesday 8th July dealing with diabetes-induced heart disease, sponsored by the British Heart Foundation.

Organisers of the conference include academics from the University of Central Lancashire and Consultant Diabetologists from Royal Preston and Chorley Hospitals. All are keen that the Symposium, which also includes a Mayoral Reception at the Harris Museum, should be instrumental in raising awareness of diabetes mellitus, a condition which often goes unrecognised by sufferers, and therefore untreated.

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-Notes to editors follow-

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1. The 4th International Symposium on Diabetes Mellitus and its Complications will take place at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston, UK, from 7-8 July 2003. The lectures will be held in Maudland TVI lecture theatre (M49) while the posters and commercial displays will be held at the Marsh Building Lecture Theatre.
2. On the evening of Monday 7th July there will be a Mayoral Reception for delegates and distinguished guests at the Harris Museum in Preston from 5.30pm. This will be followed by the Symposium dinner at Foster Building Restaurant.
3. Media enquiries should be directed to Pam Culley, Media & Public Relations, University of Central Lancashire, tel: 01772 894425, pculley@uclan.ac.uk. Further information can be obtained from Professor Jaipaul Singh, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Central Lancashire, tel: 01772 893515, jsingh3@uclan.ac.uk as well as Dr Abdul Lakhdar, Consultant Diabetologist at RPH (Abdul.Lakhdar@LTHTR.nhs.uk tel: 01772 522092) and Dr Satyan Rajbhandari (Consultant Diabetologist, Chorley General Hospital) (Satyan.Rajbhandari@LTHTR.nhs.uk; tel: 01257 245028).
4. There are two types of diabetes mellitus, type 1 (juvenile onset) or type 2 (maturity onset). The disease is caused by a deficiency of the metabolic hormone insulin as in type 1 diabetes or in both the deficiency and reduced action (insensitivity or resistance) of insulin (type 2). If insulin is either not present or defective in its action then the glucose rises in the blood causing hyperglycaemia. This in turn results in polyuria (excessive urination), polydipsia (thirst), polyphagia (hunger), weight loss, fatigue, cramps and blurred vision in the short term and in the longterm a series of micro and macro vascular complications including cardiomyopathy (an enlarged weak heart), retinopathy (damaged retina and then blindness), neuropathy (loss of touch, feeling and sensation in hands and feet), and nephropathy (kidney damage and later failure). Moreover, the risk for diabetic men to develop heart disease and hypertension (high blood pressure) increases by 2-3 fold and for women 5-6 fold. It is now known that more than 50% of all diabetics die primarily from cardiovascular complications. A wealth of evidence base have accumulated in support of earlier detection and treatment of diabetes lead to prevention of diabetic complications.