Written statement from IDF Europe to Provisional Agenda Item 13
Matters arising from resolutions and decisions of the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board - Reducing the burden of noncommunicable diseases through strengthening prevention and control of diabetes
71st session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, 13-15 September 2021

IDF Europe warmly welcomes the recognition through Resolution WHA74.4 (2021) of the prevention and management of diabetes as the cornerstone of a reduction in the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The Resolution requests the Director-General to develop, in collaboration with Member States, and in consultation with non-State actors and people living with or affected by diabetes, recommendations to strengthen and monitor diabetes responses within national NCD programmes.

We fully agree with the challenges and opportunities identified, and the recommendations for action contained, in WHO’s Discussion Paper, 9 August 2021, “Draft recommendations to strengthen and monitor diabetes responses within national NCD programmes including potential targets”. We want to draw special attention to the opportunity presented by diabetes as a potential tracer for all NCDs. Beyond the aspects mentioned in the paper (required coordination of inputs from healthcare professionals (HCPs), access to medicines and technologies and the need for patient empowerment), diabetes is also a natural use case for the collection and analysis of health data, including real-world evidence, supported by artificial intelligence, for improved prevention and health outcomes.

We also would like to emphasize the absolute necessity of monitoring the outcomes of prevention initiatives. Despite the numerous commitments to halt the increase in diabetes prevalence over the past 30 years, the number of PwD in Europe has continued to rise. It is imperative that the barriers to the effective implementation of prevention initiatives be fully understood, if we are to successfully tackle the diabetes epidemic.

IDF Europe agrees with the targets outlined in the discussion paper. In reviewing the input of the WHO/Europe region, we would also highlight the need for the set-up of targets on paediatric diabetes management, especially in light of the lower life expectancy of people diagnosed with diabetes as children, as well as for more attention to be paid to rarer forms of diabetes. With the rising mean age of mothers in Europe, gestational diabetes is another area, where prevention and monitoring targets are required. Not only does gestational diabetes increase the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth, but it also raises the risk for both the mother and the baby of developing T2D later in life.

Finally, we call on all governments not only to implement in full the recommendations set out in the discussion paper, but in particular to develop an honest, equal and meaningful collaboration with their national diabetes associations, citizens and civil society at large, all of whom have proved invaluable allies during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Only with this in place can the recommended targets of 80% of people living with diabetes being diagnosed and an equal proportion having good control of their glycaemia be met by 2030.

IDF Europe and its network of 70 national diabetes associations in 44 European countries are committed to working with WHO and individual countries to address the diabetes epidemic and reduce the burden of NCDs.

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i Excess mortality and cardiovascular disease in young adults with type 1 diabetes in relation to age at onset: a nationwide, register-based cohort study – Cross ref DOI link: https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31506-X


iii Progression from gestational diabetes to type 2 diabetes in one region of Scotland: an observational follow-up study, Claire E Eades, Maggie Styles, Graham P Leese, Helen Cheyne & Josie MM Evans, BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth

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