

+-----+
-----+
Diabetes, Killing Every Seven Seconds, Spurs Global Action Call
2011-09-14 00:27:23.474 GMT

By Jason Gale

Sept. 14 (Bloomberg) -- Diabetes afflicts 366 million people, killing one every seven seconds, according to the International Diabetes Federation, which said new estimates of the global burden should spur greater action from world leaders.

The number of sufferers was pegged at 285 million worldwide in 2009. Since then, China reported 92.4 million people with the condition, more than double the federation's estimate. That's helped ratchet up health-care spending on diabetes to \$465 billion, federation officials said at the European Association for the Study of Diabetes conference in Lisbon yesterday.

"This emphasizes how we've been underestimating the prevalence of diabetes," Andrew Boulton, president-elect of EASD and a professor of medicine at the University of Manchester, said at the meeting.

The findings were released six days before world leaders meet at the United Nations in New York to discuss a global plan to fight diabetes, stroke, cancer and other so-called non-communicable diseases. Surging rates of obesity-linked chronic illnesses threaten economic growth and undermine social and economic development, governments said in a draft political declaration.

Asia accounts for about 60 percent of global population of diabetes sufferers, said Paul Zimmet, who heads a World Health Organization collaborating center for diabetes epidemiology. The latest estimates reflect the burden in China, which wasn't fully recognized in the diabetes federation's previous tally, he said.

China Underestimated

"It became pretty clear that that might be an underestimate when the Chinese released figures about a year ago saying they have nearly 100 million people with diabetes," said Zimmet, who is also a director of the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute in Melbourne. "The figures only strengthen the concern about the impact of diabetes from a public health and economic point of view."

The International Diabetes Federation, an umbrella group of more than 200 national associations, estimates 4.6 million people die annually because of diabetes. Four of every five people with the disease live in developing countries, with most affected men and women being of working age, it said last year.

"Diabetes is a massive challenge the world can no longer afford to ignore," Jean Claude Mbanya, the federation's president, said in a statement yesterday. "The clock is ticking for the world's leaders. We expect action from their meeting next week at the UN that will halt diabetes' relentless upwards trajectory."

The UN meeting on Sept. 19 and 20 aims to encourage a "whole of government and whole of society" response to non-communicable diseases, including a reduction in risk factors such as smoking and unhealthy diets.

For Related News and Information:

Top stories about science: [TNI SCIENCE WWTOP <GO>](#) Today's most popular
health-care stories: [MNI HEA <GO>](#) Bloomberg Drug Database: [BDRG <GO>](#)
Top health stories: [HTOP <GO>](#) News about medical research: [NI MEDICAL
<GO>](#)

--With assistance from Albertina Torsoli in Lisbon. Editors:
Terje Langeland, Marthe Fourcade.

To contact the reporter on this story:

Jason Gale in Singapore at +65-6212-1579 or j.gale@bloomberg.net

To contact the editor responsible for this story:

Jason Gale at +65-6212-1579 or
j.gale@bloomberg.net