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Type 2 diabetes in Indians: How different than the Western World?

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Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality globally. Although other racial groups are affected, the prevalence of T2DM in Indians is extremely high and continues to rise rapidly. India is considered the diabetes capital of the world with over 70 million people with diabetes and more than 70 million people with pre-diabetes. The most probable explanations are genetic susceptibility, fast urbanization, diet pattern and change in lifestyle. Indians get diabetes at a lower body weight, with around 20-30% people not being overweight. Other distinctive features in Indians compared to western population are excess visceral fat, pancreatic fat and fatty liver. In addition, Indian diabetics have increased insulin resistance and early deterioration in β -cell function compared to other ethnic groups. In conclusion, Indian diabetics are quite different than the western population in terms of pathophysiology, clinical profile and getting diabetic complications, therefore the need to take account of these aspects while interventions are planned.

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