

PRESS RELEASE

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PARENTS STRUGGLE TO SPOT LIFE-THREATENING DIABETES IN THEIR OWN CHILDREN

- ***Four-in-five parents have trouble recognising the warning signs of diabetes***
 - ***One-in-three wouldn't spot them at all***

Brussels, 14 November 2018: To mark diabetes awareness month and World Diabetes Day on November 14, the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) is urging families to learn more about the warning signs of diabetes. New research from IDF has discovered that parents would struggle to spot this serious life-long disease in their own children. Despite the majority of people surveyed having a family member with diabetes, an alarming four-in-five parents would have trouble recognising the warning signs. One-in-three wouldn't spot them at all.

IDF says the findings underline the need for education and awareness to help people spot the diabetes warning signs early.

The warning signs can include: excessive thirst, frequent urination, a lack of energy, blurred vision, slow healing wounds, and numbness in the feet and/or hands.

Julieta Laudani, a mother from Argentina, agrees that diabetes is hard to spot. She only discovered her daughter Fran had type 1 diabetes when, at 18 months old, Fran went through eight diapers in quick succession. Julieta, like many parents, did not think babies could have the disease and even medical staff first thought Fran had a urinary infection.

Julieta describes the discovery as a shock, saying: "Fran was conscious, she wasn't even dehydrated or anything. We actually had no idea that diabetes could be present in little kids at all. We knew adults could get it, old people for example, but their circumstances were not like ours. There's not much knowledge. It would be great to change that."

According to IDF, a lack of knowledge about diabetes means that spotting the warning signs is not just a problem for parents, but is an issue impacting a cross-section of society. Four-in-five adults across the globe failed to correctly identify the warning signs of diabetes in the IDF study. This is a major concern, due to the signs being milder in type 2 diabetes, the most prevalent form of the condition, responsible for around 90% of all diabetes cases.

Left untreated or unmanaged, diabetes can lead to life-changing complications. These include blindness, amputation, kidney failure, heart attack and stroke. Diabetes was responsible for four million deaths in 2017.

"It is vital everyone learns to identify the warning signs of diabetes. Sadly, diabetes can be easily missed or mistaken for something else and this leaves people – whether children or adults – vulnerable to serious consequences," said Prof. Nam H. Cho, IDF President.

"Diabetes can become a life-threatening disease. It has devastating complications if not treated early and managed appropriately. The rise in diabetes – particularly type 2, which is largely preventable –

could in many cases be halted if people knew the warning signs and risk factors so they could adopt a healthier lifestyle or, if necessary, seek treatment. For many, particularly in developing countries, type 1 diabetes is still a death sentence. Many with type 2 diabetes are diagnosed too late when complications are already present. This is unacceptable and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.”

This November, the International Diabetes Federation is urging people to test their diabetes knowledge and learn more. IDF has made an awareness assessment available online: <http://discoverdiabetes.idf.org/>

For more information about diabetes awareness month and World Diabetes Day, visit <https://www.worlddiabetesday.org/>

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About the International Diabetes Federation

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) is an umbrella organization of over 230 national diabetes associations in 170 countries and territories. It represents the interests of the growing number of people with diabetes and those at risk. The Federation has been leading the global diabetes community since 1950. www.idf.org

Research methodology

The research comprised of an online survey of 7,000 people, consisting of statistical representations from the United Kingdom, Brazil, China, India, South Africa, Turkey and the United States of America. Nationally representative quotas were applied for gender, age (18 to 65 years old) and region. 46% of those surveyed are parents and have at least one child aged under 18 years old. The full research results can be made available upon request.