

Dramatic increase of Type 1 diabetes in under fives

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Researchers are calling for more work in to the reasons behind a big increase of young children with Type 1 diabetes. A new study, led by Bristol University, has discovered that the number of children under five-years-old with Type 1 diabetes has increased five-fold over 20 years.

Whilst the largest rise of the condition was seen in children under five, Type 1 diabetes in under 15s almost doubled during the study. There was a 2.3 per cent increase in the number of children diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes each year.

Simon O'Neill, Director of Care, Information and Advocacy Services at Diabetes UK said: "This project has produced some very interesting results.

"The evidence of a steep rise of Type 1 diabetes found in the under fives indicates that the peak age for diagnosis of the condition in the UK is becoming younger. Whilst 10-14 year-olds remain the largest group for diagnosis, the rise in cases found in children under five is worrying."

Polly Bingley, Professor of Diabetes at Bristol University added: "The incidence of childhood Type 1 diabetes has been shown to be increasing all over Europe, particularly in the very young.

"The increase is too steep to be put down to genetic factors, so it must be due to changes in our environment. This could either mean that we are being exposed to something new, or that we now have reduced exposure

to something that was previously controlling our immune responses. We now need to work to identify what these changes might be.”

The new research, to be announced at Diabetes UK’s Annual Professional Conference, comes from researchers at the University of Bristol who were funded by Diabetes UK. The study looked at Oxford’s population of 2.6m people between 1985 and 2004.

Source: Bristol University

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