

# Metabolic syndrome can help identify diabetes risk in Aboriginal Canadians

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Metabolic syndrome is the clustering of risk factors associated with diabetes and heart disease, such as obesity, high cholesterol, high glucose and hypertension. Aboriginal Canadians have a 3-5 times higher prevalence of type 2 diabetes compared with non-Aboriginal Canadians.

The 10-year study involved 492 residents from the Sandy Lake First Nation community in Ontario. It found that the 10-year incidence of [diabetes](#) was 17.5%, which increased with age from 10.5% among participants aged 10-19 years to 43.3% in people 40-49 years old.

"The [metabolic syndrome](#) is not a diagnostic tool; however, the syndrome and its components may be used to communicate increased risk of developing diabetes within remote Aboriginal communities where the 2-hour oral glucose tolerance test to determine impaired glucose tolerance is not easily accessible," write Dr. Anthony Hanley of the University of Toronto and coauthors. They also note that implementing intervention strategies with people who have the syndrome may help prevent or delay diabetes.

The study was conducted by researchers from the University of Toronto; University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario; the Sandy Lake Health and Diabetes Project; Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, Maryland; St. Michael's Hospital and Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto, in partnership with Sandy Lake First Nation.

In a related commentary <http://www.cmaj.ca/press/pg601.pdf>, Dr.

Gerald Reaven of Stanford University School of Medicine in Stanford, California writes that the results of the research study support findings in other populations that a diagnosis of the metabolic syndrome identifies those at increased risk of developing [type 2 diabetes](#), but raises the possibility that individual components of the metabolic syndrome might be used in a simpler fashion to accomplish the same task.

Source: Canadian Medical Association Journal

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