Diabetes most prevalent in Southern US

September 25 2009

Diabetes prevalence is highest in the Southern and Appalachian states and lowest in the Midwest and the Northeast of America. Researchers writing in BioMed Central's open access journal *Population Health Metrics* have used two public data sources to investigate the prevalence of diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes mellitus at the State level.

Goodarz Danaei, from the Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, worked with a team of researchers to combine the data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. He said, "Diabetes mellitus is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, accounting for approximately 70,000 annual deaths. To our knowledge, this is the first study to estimate what the true level of diabetes disease is in every state and how the different states perform in terms of diagnosed vs. undiagnosed diabetes".

Age-standardized diabetes prevalence was highest in Mississippi, West Virginia, Louisiana, Texas, South Carolina, Alabama and Georgia, ranging from 15.8% to 16.6% for men and 12.4% to 14.8% for women. The lowest prevalences were found in Vermont, Minnesota, Montana, and Colorado, just 7% for women in the Northeast and some Western states. These results currently provide the only estimates of total diabetes and undiagnosed diabetes in U.S. states. According to Danaei, "States like Minnesota and Alabama with the highest estimated diabetes prevalence in our analysis also have the highest levels of blood pressure and cardiovascular disease risk. This concentration of cardiovascular risks and diabetes points to the need for lifestyle and health care

interventions in these states".

The researchers hope their figures will provide motivation, guidance, and benchmarks for designing, implementing, and evaluating diabetes prevention and state level control programs at the state level.

More information: Diabetes prevalence and diagnosis in US states: analysis of health surveys; Goodarz Danaei, Ari B Friedman, Shefali Oza, Christopher JL Murray and Majid Ezzati; *Population Health Metrics* (in press); www.pophealthmetrics.com/

Source: BioMed Central (news : web)