

The Medical Minute: November is diabetes month

November 11 2010, By Robert Gabbay

About 24 million adults in the U.S. have Diabetes. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently released new projections that the incidence of diabetes in the U.S. will triple by 2050, meaning that 1 in 3 adults will have the disease.

This “Diabetes Tsunami” that is predicted during the next 40 years portends a health care disaster. Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness, kidney failure and amputations, and it increases the risk of heart disease and stroke by two-to-four times. Avoiding the catastrophe will require reducing the incidence and delaying the onset through individual lifestyle changes, and reducing complications through improved healthcare delivery systems.

As Diabetes Awareness Month is observed throughout November, now is an important time to both bring this issue to light and convince individuals to commit to the lifestyle changes that will impact their own risk for developing diabetes.

Diabetes is a disease that results from the body losing its ability to regulate the amount of sugar in the blood. Ultimately, damage to the insulin-secreting cells of the pancreas makes the disease irreversible, but much can be done to prevent or delay this progression among individuals at risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes, which accounts for more than 90 percent of the disease cases.

Risk factors for Type 2 Diabetes disease include obesity, a sedentary

lifestyle and family history. Certain ethnic groups are at a higher risk; however, obesity and sedentary lifestyle are the greatest risk factors for all individuals.

Diabetes Awareness Month is a perfect time to remind people with either Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes that they should strive to be in control. Daily self-management, including attention to an appropriate diet, exercise, adherence to medications and blood glucose monitoring, is the key to good health. Complications can be avoided by reaching evidence-based goals for blood sugar (A1C

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