

'Sitting down' risk for diabetes in South Asians regardless of exercise, waist size

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For South Asians, time spent sitting down is a risk factor for diabetes which is not counteracted by time spent exercising or decreased waist size. These are the findings of a new study funded by the National Prevention Research Initiative (NPRI), which is led by the Medical Research Council.

Researchers from the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh screened over 1,200 individuals of Indian and Pakistani descent for [blood glucose levels](#) (indicative of [diabetes](#) or an increased risk for the disease), [waist size](#), time spent sitting down and physical activity levels.

Study leader Dr. Jason Gill, of the Institute of Cardiovascular and Medical Sciences at the University of Glasgow, explained what their results revealed: “South Asians living in the UK have a far greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes and, on average, develop the disease approximately 10 years before white Europeans of the same age. It is well known that carrying too much fat, particularly around the waist, increases the risk of developing adult-onset diabetes, as does a lack of physical activity, but this is the first time that time spent simply sitting down has been shown to be an independent and significant risk factor for diabetes in a population of South Asian origin.”

Professor Stephen Holgate, chair of the MRC Population and Systems Medicine Board, said: “Approximately one quarter of UK South Asians over the age of 55 have type 2 diabetes, so it is very important that behaviour that is beneficial to health is promoted in this community.

Since 2004, the Medical Research Council has managed the National Prevention Research Initiative, one of the major partnership initiatives that are paramount to researching lifestyles affecting health. Often these are quite complex but sometimes, as in this case, we find that simple aspects of lifestyle can have a powerful effect.”

Dr. Gill added: “While further research is required, it would be wise for South Asians to have active lifestyles that reduce the amount of time they spend sitting down. While most people have no choice but to sit at work, taking the opportunity to stand up during breaks might help reduce the risk.”

More information: The research is published in the journal *Diabetes Care*.

Provided by Medical Research Council

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