

New findings show link between diabetes and pancreatic cancer

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Credit: southboromedical.com/University of Melbourne

In a new study published today in *Annals of Surgical Oncology*, clinicians worked with mathematicians to review data from 1973 to 2013 to conclude there was a time-dependent link between being diagnosed with diabetes and pancreatic cancer.

A review of 88 international studies to date, is the largest analysis on the

topic published.

Dr Mehrdad Nikfarjam, liver, pancreas and biliary specialist from the Department of Surgery at the University of Melbourne said [pancreatic cancer](#) was often diagnosed when at an advanced, incurable stage.

"This is an important paper that highlights for doctors and in patients with newly diagnosed [diabetes](#) without an obvious cause, a diagnosis of underlying pancreatic cancer should be considered," he said.

"The study revealed the risk of pancreatic cancer was greatest after the diagnosis of diabetes but remained elevated long after the diagnosis. The presence of diabetes remains a modest risk factor for the development of a cancer later in life."

While the numbers of pancreatic cancer in the population are relatively low, the study suggests a screening program should be considered.

"The priority on screening should be on patients with new-onset diabetes but can later be expanded to long-standing diabetic patients," said Dr Nikfarjam.

"New onset diabetes is more prevalent in people over the age of 55. It may be important to consider screening all newly diagnosed diabetics for pancreatic cancer, particularly those without significant risk factors for developing diabetes in the first place."

Provided by University of Melbourne

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