

Researchers discover 'real world' link between type 2 diabetes and low blood sugar risk

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Researchers from the University of Leicester and Leicester's Hospitals have discovered that many people suffering from type 2 diabetes also suffer from low blood sugar levels that can pose a significant risk to their health.

The research team from the Leicester Diabetes Centre, led by postgraduate researcher Chloe Louise Edridge, reviewed a series of studies into how often hypoglycaemia – or [low blood sugar](#) – occurs in people with type 2 diabetes and has discovered that the condition is especially prevalent in those on insulin, while remaining common for those on other treatment regimens.

As part of the study, which is published in the scientific journal *PLOS ONE*, the team considered both mild cases - when an individual could bring their [blood sugar](#) back to normal themselves - and severe cases, when emergency services or family and friends needed the help.

532,542 participants were included in the review. Nearly half of them had experienced mild hypoglycaemia and 6 per cent had experienced severe hypoglycaemia. Individuals were shown to have experienced 19 mild episodes per year and just less than one severe episode per year.

Hypoglycaemia was particularly common amongst those who were on insulin, yet still fairly common for other [treatment regimens](#).

Postgraduate researcher at the University of Leicester Chloe Louise Edridge said: "Our results highlight an urgent need for raising awareness amongst patients and healthcare professionals about hypoglycaemia. This study particularly highlights the need for patient education to raise awareness of hypoglycaemia and the consideration of a patient's hypoglycaemia risk by healthcare professionals when prescribing diabetes treatments.

"We are extremely proud of this large review, which emphasises the importance of hypoglycaemia consideration in people with type 2 diabetes."

Hypoglycaemia in type 2 [diabetes](#) is associated with a considerable cost and burden to health services, with an estimated annual cost to the NHS of £39 million.

There can also be substantial consequences for the individual, with an increased risk of mortality, morbidity and impact on an individual's quality of life, their employment, social interactions, and driving.

Treatment for [type 2 diabetes](#) is also becoming more complicated, with the options available continually growing.

Previous reviews have tended to focus on clinical trial data, where the findings may not truly reflect real world settings. Knowing how often [hypoglycaemia](#) occurs in real world settings is important to help understand its impact, enable planning, prevention and the choice of treatments patients are placed on.

More information: "Prevalence and Incidence of Hypoglycaemia in 532,542 People with Type 2 Diabetes on Oral Therapies and Insulin: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Population Based Studies." *PLoS ONE* 10(6): e0126427. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0126427](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0126427)

Provided by University of Leicester

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