

Expert discusses WHO warning on diabetes' 'unrelenting march'

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As the World Health Organization warns of an '[unrelenting march of diabetes](#)' with 422 million cases in 2014, an expert from The University of Manchester has reacted to the problem and suggests some ways to address the obesity epidemic that fuels it.

Dr Chris Bundy, Senior Lecturer in Behavioural Medicine/Health Psychology said: "We are living with an [obesity epidemic](#). People with the least resources; lower socio-economic groups; socially unstable groups; and those with [mental health problems](#) are most affected by [obesity](#). Parents who are obese are more likely to have overweight children, who are also more likely to be inactive, perpetuating a cycle of obesity and inactivity which increases the future risk of illness.

"In addition, we live in a society where [food](#) companies bombard people with images of high fat, high sugar food and drinks. Subtle psychological messages are paired with images of food and drink and people are sold a lifestyle that is inconsistent with the foods being advertised. The amount of spend on research and services to manage obesity compared with the cost to the tax-payer of living with the associated health problems is very small. This needs to change.

"The answer lies in a strategy that addresses food regulation and legislation so that healthy food messages are as common as unhealthy images and messages; the influence of 'social norms' by changing what is acceptable in specific social groups; the individual person – supporting people to change.

"Health psychologists and behavioural medicine practitioners have such expertise and should be incorporated into existing weight management services which should be expanded to address this ongoing epidemic."

Provided by University of Manchester

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