

# Patients at risk over failure to recognize important diabetes subtype

October 23 2017

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The health of people with diabetes is being put at risk due to the failure of doctors to recognise which type of diabetes they have, a new study in the journal *Diabetes Care* reports.

In the first ever study of its kind, researchers from the University of Surrey, examined the primary care records of more than 2 million people, assessing the frequency of different types of [diabetes](#) and the accuracy of diagnosis. Particular focus was given to those who developed Type 3c diabetes. Type 3c diabetes occurs as a result of pancreatic inflammation, abnormal growth of tissue on the organ or surgically removing part or all of the tissue, which affects the body's ability to produce insulin.

The researchers discovered that up to 97.3 percent of people who have previously experienced pancreatic disease are misdiagnosed, typically with Type 2 diabetes, rather than the correct condition Type 3c. Such a misdiagnosis impacts on the treatment offered to patients, with those suffering from Type 3c diabetes requiring insulin therapy more urgently than those with type 2 diabetes. Delays in delivering the appropriate treatment can have devastating long term effects for patients with Type 3c diabetes with nerve, eye and kidney damage all possible consequences.

Researchers were also surprised to find that adults were more likely to develop Type 3c diabetes than Type 1 diabetes. In their sample, 205 more people were newly diagnosed with Type 3c diabetes than with Type 1. This discovery shows this under-recognised form of diabetes is more common than previously thought and could pose a potential threat to public health.

Senior author of the report, Professor Simon de Lusignan from the University of Surrey, said: "Greater awareness of Type 3c diabetes within the medical profession is required immediately to improve management of this disease, which now has a higher incidence than Type 1 diabetes in adults.

"Our research shows that the majority of people with Type 3c diabetes

are being misdiagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, putting both their short and [long term health](#) at risk. Diabetes and its complications place a tremendous burden on the NHS and it is important that patients are diagnosed quickly and correctly, helping them get the specific care they need.

"This builds on our previous work that suggests that failure to flag the right diagnosis is associated with lower quality care."

Latest figures from Public Health England indicate that 3.8 million people in England aged over 16 have diabetes, around 9% of the adult population, with an estimated £14 billion pounds being spent a year on treating the illness and its complications.

Provided by University of Surrey

Citation: Patients at risk over failure to recognize important diabetes subtype (2017, October 23) retrieved 25 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-10-patients-failure-important-diabetes-subtype.html>

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