

## Video: Expert discusses the cause of diabetes

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The numbers are staggering: 30.3 million Americans—350 million people worldwide—live with diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Nearly 1 in 4 Americans don't know they have it. U.S. health care costs for diabetes are estimated at \$260 billion a year. If you're among the 1 in 10 Americans living with diabetes, you spend an average of \$8,000 more a year than someone without it.

David Harlan, MD, the William and Doris Krupp Professor in Medicine, professor of medicine and co-director of the Diabetes Center of Excellence, and his team are focused on reducing those numbers by targeting the cause of the disease. They are closely examining what is going on in the pancreas when the [immune cells](#) attack insulin-producing cells, rendering them useless.

"UMass investigators over the past several years have developed techniques to look at the [insulin-producing cells](#) within the pancreas of people who don't have diabetes and those who died with type 1 and type 2 [diabetes](#)," Dr. Harlan said. "We are learning surprising new things about what happens to the insulin cells in the pancreas and the immune cells. I really think that for the first time we are looking at the relevant tissues of what is leading to the diagnosis to begin with."

Harlan said that with a fundamental new understanding of disease pathophysiology, they can develop tools to create new, more effective treatments.

Provided by University of Massachusetts Medical School

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