

Diabetic patients are more at risk of death from alcohol, accidents and suicide

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Diabetic patients are more likely to die from alcohol-related factors, accidents or suicide, according to a study published in the *European Journal of Endocrinology*. The study findings suggest that the increased risk of death from these causes may be related to the mental health of patients, which may be adversely affected by the psychological burden of living with and self-treating this debilitating disease, with potentially serious complications.

Type-1 and type-2 [diabetes](#) are highly prevalent global diseases, causing millions of deaths every year. It is well known that [diabetic patients](#) have a higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease, cancer and kidney disorders, which can lead to earlier death. However, more recently diabetes has been linked to an increased risk of depression but how poor [mental health](#) may affect patients with diabetes has not been fully investigated.

In this nationwide Finnish study, Professor Leo Niskanen and colleagues, from the University of Helsinki and Tampere and Helsinki University Hospital, assessed the alcohol-related, suicides or accidental causes of death of over 400,000 people with or without diabetes. The study reported that people with diabetes were much more likely to die from alcohol-related factors, accidents or suicide, especially patients that required regular, self-injections of insulin.

Prof Leo Niskanen comments, "We know that living with diabetes can lead to a mental-health strain. Having to monitor their glucose levels and

inject themselves daily with insulin has a huge impact on daily life; simply eating, moving and sleeping all affect [blood glucose](#) levels. This strain combined with the anxiety of developing serious complications like heart or kidney disease may also take their toll on psychological well-being."

Prof Leo Niskanen states, "This study has highlighted that there is a need for effective psychological support for people with diabetes. If they feel like they are under a heavy mental burden or consider that their use of alcohol is excessive, they should not hesitate to discuss these issues with their primary care physician. There are many ways that these problems can be managed, provided they are communicated."

The team now plans to carry out a more in depth investigation of the risk factors and mechanisms underpinning these findings to help identify strategies to avoid future deaths. In addition, the influence of drugs such as antidepressants, the occurrence of diabetic complications such as [low blood glucose](#), or the socioeconomic status of [patients](#) will also be considered.

The study, "Excess mortality in Finnish diabetic subjects due to alcohol, accidents and suicide: a nationwide study," will be published in the *European Journal of Endocrinology* on 13 October 2018.

Provided by European Society of Endocrinology

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