

Prevention of type 2 diabetes saves billions in spending

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Prevention of type 2 diabetes is a good example of specific action that improves wellbeing and helps to curtail public spending. A project

focusing on the prevention of type 2 diabetes is being planned, with a research team led by Professor Janne Martikainen from the University of Eastern Finland in charge of modeling its societal benefit. On 12 March, the team published a report on the savings preventive measures could generate.

"The risk group for type 2 diabetes (T2D) in Finland includes 700,000 people aged 40–80. The expected total societal costs associated with T2D amount to nearly EUR 9 billion in current value. Lifestyle interventions could bring the total costs down by one, even by two billion euros. Consequently, measures to prevent type 2 diabetes offer significant savings potential for the public health sector and for the national economy, not to mention improvements in individual health and wellbeing," Professor Martikainen says.

"Furthermore, prevention and thereby reduced incidence of T2D and diabetes-associated diseases could result in 73,000–146,000 additional quality-adjusted life years. The expected total cost at individual level averages at EUR 13,500 in present value, and the corresponding achievable savings potential is somewhere between EUR 1,600 and 3,200. Based on the results of sensitivity analyses, investment in lifestyle interventions could repay itself in 3–12 years, depending on the expected cost and effectiveness of the intervention, and the initial T2D risk," Martikainen explains.

While societal cost savings could be achieved by targeting working age population at an [increased risk](#) of developing T2D, [lifestyle interventions](#) in the older age groups generate relatively more quality-adjusted life years at the population level.

"We will move forward with the T2D prevention project preparations with municipalities that have expressed an interest. Practical measures are scheduled to begin in 2021. Right now, we still have room for a few

municipalities or regions. Once the project has proved its effectiveness in the pilot municipalities, we hope to expand it across Finland," says Mika Pyykkö, Director of the Centre of Expertise for Impact Investing, describing the next stages of the project.

The Centre of Expertise for Impact Investing launched operations in January 2020. It is part of the administrative organisation of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, but serves the entire public sector in areas such as the social impact bond, or SIB.

To increase wellbeing and ensure [economic growth](#), we need to introduce new practices and pool tax revenue and private capital, with focus on preventing the occurrence and escalation of various problems. The objective is to create projects in which tax revenue is only used to pay for the desired outcomes. The repayment of and return on capital invested depend on the economic benefits that the activities in question deliver to the public sector.

In addition to working on new tentative [project](#) themes, the Centre will pursue the preparation of SIB projects originally launched by Sitra. One of these focuses on the prevention of type 2 diabetes.

More information: Centre of Expertise for Impact Investing: tem.fi/vaikuttavuusinvestoimisen-osaamiskeskus

Provided by University of Eastern Finland

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