Ethnicity and early menopause increase risk of type 2 diabetes, finds study

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University of Queensland research has found ethnicity plays a significant role in determining a woman's risk of developing type 2 diabetes after early menopause.

Dr. Hsin-Fang Chung and a team of researchers from the UQ School of Public Health analyzed the health data of more than 330,000
postmenopausal women from 13 studies conducted in Australia, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden, Japan, and China.

The research was published in the journal *Diabetes Care* and used data from the International collaboration for a Life course Approach to reproductive health and Chronic disease Event (InterLACE).

"Our findings show early menopause before the age of 45, particularly premature menopause before the age of 40, is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes in women, and the risk is higher for some ethnic groups," Dr. Chung said.

"Australian/European white women who experienced premature menopause were one and a half times more likely to have type 2 diabetes than white women who experienced menopause at the expected age of 50 to 51."

"The risk of developing type 2 diabetes after menopause at expected age was already high at 23.3% for South Asian and 18.9% for African/Caribbean Black women living in Western countries, compared to only 5.5% for white women."

"Their diabetes risk jumped to 28.6% for South Asian and 24.1% for Black women if they experience premature menopause, compared to 9.2% for white women."

Dr. Chung said this was the largest study to investigate the impact of premature menopause on the risk of type 2 diabetes in women from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Women who have experienced menopause before the age of 45 can work with their general practitioners to closely monitor and manage metabolic risk factors to improve their overall health.
Senior author, Professor Gita Mishra said current research on the prevention of type 2 diabetes is largely based on health data from white male populations.

"There are very few female-specific risk factors considered in diabetes screening guidelines with minimal evidence from non-white ethnic groups," Professor Mishra said.

"The findings from this research could help inform ethnic-specific initiatives to prevent type 2 diabetes in women globally."


Provided by University of Queensland


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