

Sweden sees rise in diabetes among young children: Report

June 18 2024



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Diabetes diagnoses among children under five have risen in recent years, a charity supporting diabetes research said Tuesday, adding that the COVID-19 pandemic could be an explanation.

A new [report](#) by Barndiabetesfonden (The Child Diabetes Fund) said that 460 children in Sweden were treated for type 1 diabetes in 2022, up from 283 in 2018, a 62 percent increase.

Almost a third of the children needed [intensive care](#) when they fell ill, Barndiabetesfonden said in a statement.

Type 1 diabetes, previously referred to as [juvenile diabetes](#), is a chronic autoimmune condition where the body does not produce any insulin, whereas the more common type 2 diabetes is a condition where the body does not produce enough insulin.

"It is frightening that type 1 diabetes is creeping down in age. It's something we need to think about how to deal with, both in research and in health care," researcher Ake Lernmark said in a report published by the [charity](#).

The organization said it was a well-known fact that viral illnesses often preceded type 1 diabetes, and noted that the current Swedish increase coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic.

It also said studies had shown that young children who contracted COVID-19 were more likely to develop type 1 diabetes if the mother had never had COVID prior to the child's birth.

If the mother had the infection or was vaccinated the risks were lower.

"In some of the children, COVID-19 likely triggered the development of a first antibody," Lernmark said in the report.

The report added that even before the pandemic, the number of cases of type 1 diabetes had been on the rise, and the slow increase that could be observed in the decades leading up to the [pandemic](#) was believed to be

related to other cold viruses.

It said that the link between diabetes cases and COVID-19 would likely subside as more people become immune.

© 2024 AFP

Citation: Sweden sees rise in diabetes among young children: Report (2024, June 18) retrieved 12 September 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-06-sweden-diabetes-young-children.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--