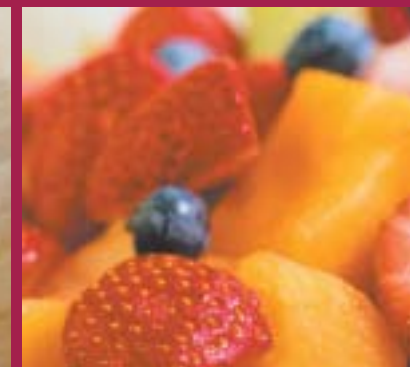
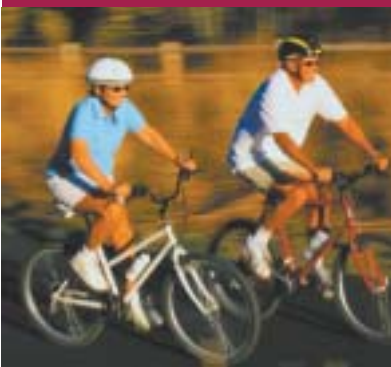


DIABETES AND PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS

A GUIDE FOR CONSUMERS AND CARERS



L O O K I N G A F T E R Y O U R H E A L T H



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LOOKING AFTER YOUR HEALTH

Looking after your physical and mental health is very important. Research tells us that for people with mental illness, physical illnesses such as diabetes are:

- more common
- less likely to be diagnosed
- less likely to be properly treated.

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is one of the physical illnesses which needs to be diagnosed and properly treated in people with mental illness. The most common form is called type 2 diabetes. It usually starts in adult life rather than childhood. Being overweight and not getting enough physical activity greatly increase the chance of having type 2 diabetes.



Diabetes is where levels of sugar in the blood are too high. This can sometimes cause symptoms such as being tired, needing to drink a lot of fluids such as water, soft drinks or coffee, or needing to urinate a lot. Most people do not have any symptoms of diabetes. Instead, there are changes happening slowly in the body which, over a number of years, can cause serious complications. The complications include:

- A high rate of heart disease and stroke (interruption of blood flow to the brain).
- Eye disease, eventually leading to blindness.
- Kidney disease, which can cause kidney failure.
- Damage to the feet, which can result in amputation.

Diabetes is very common in the general population and increasing rapidly. Medical authorities are concerned about the 'epidemic' of diabetes. They are urging people to be tested for diabetes, and to make changes to their lives that can help prevent the disease.

Diabetes can be treated but early detection is important. Losing weight and keeping active is most important, but medication is often needed as well.

CHECKING FOR DIABETES

A simple blood test can check levels of sugar in the blood. The level might be normal, or it might be high and indicate that you have diabetes.

There is a range in between, in which blood sugar levels are slightly increased. In this case, you will need to be careful that diabetes does not develop.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here are some steps you can take to keep healthy and reduce the chance of developing diabetes:

1

HAVE A GENERAL PRACTITIONER (GP) WHO CAN HELP YOU LOOK AFTER ALL YOUR HEALTH NEEDS AND VISIT HIM/HER REGULARLY.

The medical system is complicated and sometimes confusing. Ask your GP to check your physical health and make sure you can see other health professionals when you need to.



2

TAKE YOUR ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED

Work with your doctors to find the antipsychotic medication that is best for you. Do not stop taking it if you become worried about diabetes or other illnesses, but discuss your concerns with your doctor. Keeping psychotic symptoms well-treated is an important first step in making sure you stay physically healthy as well.



3

DISCUSS DIABETES AND HEART DISEASE WITH YOUR DOCTOR

All GPs and psychiatrists should know about the need for regular check-ups. In people taking antipsychotic medications, it is often necessary to check blood sugar levels more often than in the general population.

You should also ask your doctor to check for other changes that can increase the risk of heart disease. These include blood pressure, weight gain and cholesterol.



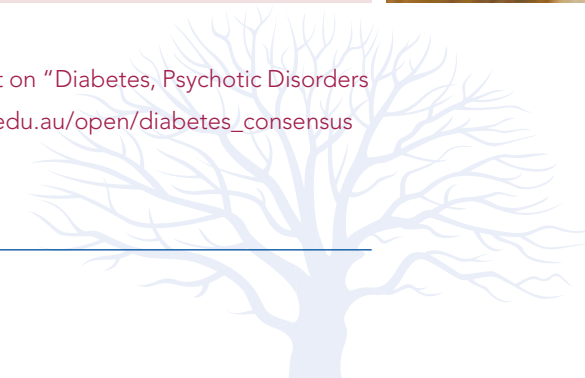
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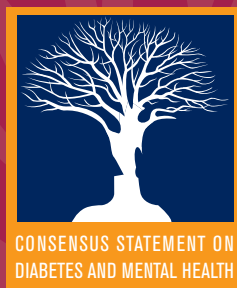
ASK FOR HELP ABOUT KEEPING YOUR WEIGHT UNDER CONTROL, STAYING ACTIVE, AND JOINING A 'QUIT SMOKING' PROGRAM.

Being overweight and not getting much physical exercise greatly increase the chance of getting diabetes. Lots of people have difficulty keeping weight off and staying active - so ask for advice from your health professionals. Smoking adds greatly to the risk of heart disease, but it can be very hard to give up - so once again, ask for help.



A website with the full Consensus Statement and Companion Document on "Diabetes, Psychotic Disorders and Antipsychotic Therapy" may be found at: www.psychiatry.unimelb.edu.au/open/diabetes_consensus





The logo which appears on the Consensus Statement, Companion Document for Consumers and Carers and consumer/carer leaflet links the three documents together under a unified symbol. The tree symbolises growth and vitality where the canopy represents the ever changing knowledge of the intricacies of the brain. The trunk reveals two faces, one speaking the other listening. This illustrates the authors' hope that the sharing of this new information will increase attention on this important global issue.