

Friday December 4, 2015

Media Statement

**WA TEAM UNDERSCORES NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING AT
WORLD DIABETES CONGRESS**

West Australian researchers have underscored to the World Diabetes Congress in Canada the importance of screening for early evidence of mental health disorders in adolescents and young adults with type 1 diabetes, especially for those with poor blood sugar control.

Telethon Kids Institute PhD student Matthew Cooper presented the findings of a Diabetes Research WA funded study, overseen by Princess Margaret Hospital for Children Clinical Associate Professor Elizabeth Davis, to the international conference earlier this week.

“Looking at the health records of nearly 1300 West Australians who were diagnosed with type 1 diabetes as children, we discovered they were more than twice as likely to be affected by mental health disorders during early adulthood than their peers,” he said.

Affective, anxiety, eating, and personality and behaviour disorders were among the conditions diagnosed more frequently among those with type 1 diabetes than their non-diabetic counterparts/peers.

“These young adults were also much more likely than those without type 1 diabetes to be simultaneously affected by more than one psychiatric disorder,” said Mr Cooper.

“And, whilst the data has some limitations, we’re concerned as these conditions were more common amongst those that died during follow up.”

A/Professor Davis said the research found these disorders occurred at a higher rate among those with a history of poor blood sugar level control.

“The study found this was the only factor associated with an increased risk of mental health disorder onset; this is an area that needs to be further investigated,” she said.

“These findings highlight the need for psychiatric disorder screening during late adolescence and early adulthood for patients with type 1 diabetes, and shed some light on those sub groups that may require additional support.”

Diabetes Research WA executive director Sherl Westlund said: “We’re pleased this funding is highlighting such an important issue and we hope this research helps change the future for those diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in childhood.”

The International Diabetes Federation World Diabetes Congress 2015, on at the Vancouver Convention Centre, finishes today, Friday December 4.

Please visit diabetesresearchwa.com.au or call (08) 9224 1006 for more information.

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