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Media Statement

## **DIABETES-SLEEP CONNECTION NEEDS MORE FOCUS**

New research is suggesting people who have trouble sleeping should be aware they face an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, says WA's peak diabetes funding group.

With Sleep Awareness Week kicking off on July 4, Diabetes Research WA is putting the spotlight on the link between sleeping issues and the condition, which is on the rise in Australia.

Executive director Sherl Westlund said a Harvard study released earlier this year highlighted that women who experienced a number of sleep concerns were at significantly greater risk of type 2 diabetes.

"In this research, which took into account health information from more than 133,000 women, it was found those who reported being affected by sleeping difficulty, frequent snoring, sleeping less than six hours and sleep apnoea or rotating shift work, were four times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes over the 10 years of the study," she said.

"And another study released this year showed teenagers who sleep less than eight hours a night are more likely to have fat around the midsection and to be resistant to insulin, which can eventually lead to type 2 diabetes.

"That's on top of earlier research showing people over the age of 45 who slept less than six hours or more than 10 hours were more likely to have diabetes."

Sleep Health Foundation chair Professor David Hillman said that growing awareness of the links between poor sleep and diabetes, provides information that will allow people to improve their health.

"We have known for some time that men and women with type 2 diabetes are at higher risk of sleep apnoea and other sleep difficulties, such as restless legs syndrome, and it appears likely that the association between diabetes and poor sleep goes both ways," he said.

"Inadequate sleep in all its forms – too little of it, sleeping at abnormal times as happens with shiftwork, and disrupted sleep as seen in sleep apnoea - appears to increase insulin resistance, predisposing to diabetes."

"It's powerful new knowledge which suggests people need to pay attention to their sleep quality and quantity as doing so could help in the battle to keep type 2 diabetes at bay."

"There is still more research needed to unravel the details of the links between sleep, insulin resistance and diabetes but there is a growing body of evidence in favour of them."

To help Diabetes Research WA fund more ground-breaking research or sign up to their Be Extraordinary Regular Giving campaign head to [www.diabetesresearchwa.com.au](http://www.diabetesresearchwa.com.au) or call (08) 9224 1006.

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SOURCES: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00125-015-3860-9>  
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