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Media Statement

TACKLING DIABETES KEY TO REDUCING CANCER RATES

Urgent support for diabetes research is required to help prevent a surge in cancer cases linked to rising rates of the condition, according to a WA charity.

Ahead of cancer awareness event Daffodil Day on August 25, Diabetes Research WA executive director Sherl Westlund said Australians could expect cancer rates to keep going up in line with increasing rates of all forms of diabetes unless more was done to stop the trend.

“Research shows that people with diabetes have a higher risk of being diagnosed with certain cancers including breast, bowel, pancreatic, liver, and bladder, and in some cases the risk is up to 70 percent higher,” she said.

“It follows then that if we can fund research that can help bring down rates of diabetes and further support lifestyle intervention programs that may prevent some cases of type 2 and gestational diabetes, we should see a reduction in cancer cases.”

Ms Westlund said the group was concerned many people were unaware of the link.

“Most people don’t know diabetes can lead to severe health complications, like cancer, if it’s not managed well,” she said.

“It’s also poorly understood that managing diabetes can be extremely difficult, even with the latest advances such as continuous glucose monitoring and insulin pumps, because all sorts of things can impact blood sugar levels such as stress, exercise and other medications, for example.”

Ms Westlund said it remained a mystery why those with diabetes were more likely to develop some cancers.

“It’s suspected high blood sugar or perhaps high insulin levels associated with diabetes could be to blame but that’s not been confirmed,” she explained.

“So there’s a need to pinpoint the ‘why’ behind the link as soon as possible and at the same time pursue other avenues for preventing diabetes or indeed curing it.”

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Background:

<http://www.diabetes.co.uk/diabetes-complications/diabetes-and-cancer.html>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25488912>

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