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Media Statement

WA FUNDING GROUP WARNS OF DIABETES & AGEING CONFUSION

WA's peak diabetes funding group is urging seniors to put diabetes higher on their radars warning many are mistaking symptoms of the condition for normal signs of ageing.

Diabetes Research WA executive director Sherl Westlund said National Diabetes Week (July 10 – 16) was the ideal time to focus on helping older West Australians keep diabetes top of mind when it came to health.

"This risk of developing type 2 diabetes increases as people age but at the same time, it can be a more hidden disease in seniors because some of the more common symptoms such as feeling tired and lethargic can simply be put down to ageing," said Ms Westlund.

"Feeling thirsty all the time and urinating a lot can also be indicators but because some people lose their sense of thirst as they get older, these symptoms may not appear.

"Slow healing wounds, blurred vision and frequent infections can be other signals but, again, may simply be thought to be an issue to do with ageing.

"Our funded research has also shown that type 2 diabetes can dramatically affect the everyday thinking skills of up to one-in-three adults aged more than 60 – another symptom that could easily be chalked up to general ageing."

In Australia, it's estimated up to half a million people have type 2 diabetes but aren't aware of it.

Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Director of Diabetes Services and diabetes consultant physician Dr Joey Kaye said: "The worry for older Australians is that missing the early signs of diabetes delays the diagnosis and puts at risk their general health and independence."

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 or call (08) 9224 1006.

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