Inequalities in Diabetes in Canada

Diabetes can lead to:
- Serious health conditions (e.g. heart disease, kidney failure)
- Disability (e.g. lower limb amputation)
- Poor mental health
- Time lost from work
- Increased mortality risk

Factors that increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes— or of experiencing negative health outcomes—include socioeconomic and environmental factors, being overweight or obese, physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour, poor nutrition and smoking.

The prevalence of diabetes among adults increases with lower socioeconomic status, especially among women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diabetes by Employment Status</th>
<th>Diabetes by Education Level</th>
<th>Diabetes by Income Quintile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanently unable to work</td>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>Prevalence (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed, currently not looking for work</td>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed, currently looking for work</td>
<td>Some postsecondary</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Community college/technical school/University certificate</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University graduate</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complex social, environmental and behavioural factors result in inequalities in the burden of diabetes between certain populations in Canada.

The prevalence of diabetes is:
- 2.3X higher among South Asian adults
- 2.1X higher among Black adults
- 1.9X higher than among White adults
- 1.5X higher than non-Indigenous people

The prevalence of diabetes for Indigenous adults is:
- 1.9X higher for First Nations adults living off reserve
- 1.5X higher for Métis adults

Inequities experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations are a direct result of colonial policies and practices that included massive forced relocation, loss of lands, creation of the reserve system, banning of Indigenous languages and cultural practices, and creation of the residential school system. Unaddressed intergenerational trauma adds to the ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous peoples.

To promote opportunities for all Canadians to achieve better health outcomes and address inequalities in diabetes requires improving factors that contribute to these inequalities, such as income and education levels, unemployment, poor working conditions, built environment, and access to prevention and care services (e.g. physical activity programs).

* Type 1 or 2 diabetes combined, excluding gestational diabetes.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey - Annual Component (2010–2013).

For more data on health inequalities in Canada, visit: [www.health-infobase.canada.ca/health-inequalities](http://www.health-infobase.canada.ca/health-inequalities)


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