

### Current Health Event

#### Diabetes

The number of people living with diabetes has nearly quadrupled since 1980 to 422 million adults worldwide, with most of the increase observed in developing countries. WHO is marking World Health Day, 7 April 2016, by calling for action on diabetes, highlighting the need to step up prevention and treatment.

#### Editorial note:

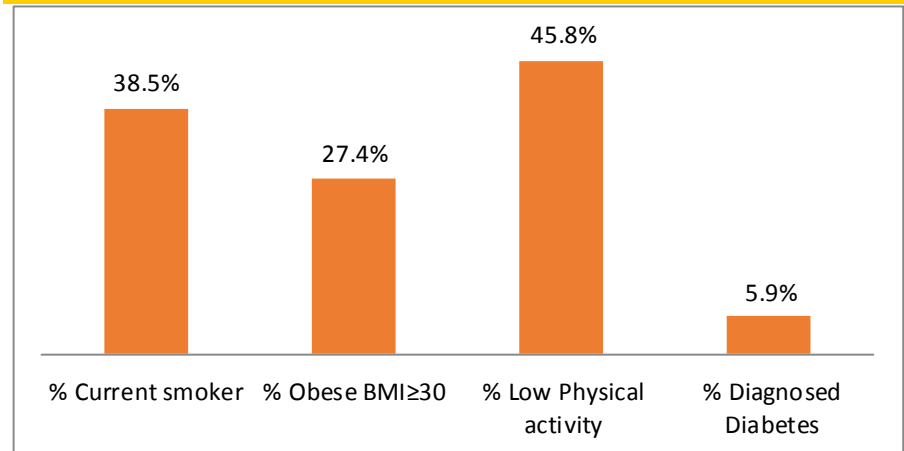
Over 14% of the population in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR), close to 43 million persons have diabetes. Rising diabetes prevalence in the Region is closely related to the rising prevalence of overweight and obesity.

It is estimated that up to 1 in 7 Lebanese individuals might suffer from diabetes. In Lebanon, the latest WHO STEPS study in 2009 shows that the numbers of people with diabetes are increasing compared to previous years. Nearly 200 000 Lebanese remain undiagnosed. The prevalence of diabetes in the Lebanese population could reach up to 1 in 5 by 2035. Lebanon ranked 22nd highest rate of diabetes in the world, ranking it 7th in the Middle East. (*IDF Diabetes Atlas, 2015*).

The most common form of diabetes in Lebanon and the region is Type 2, which is linked to “modern lifestyle”, obesity, physical inactivity, and a diet high in refined carbohydrates.

Diabetes which share common risk factors with other NCDs can lead to higher complications if linked to environments that promote unhealthy choices such as smoking, alcohol abuse, physical inactivity and poor nutrition habits.

Figure: Percentage of Lebanese (25-64 years, both sexes) with diabetes and related risk factors. (WHO STEPS, 2009)



On World Health Day, WHO is calling on:

- **Individuals** to make healthy food choices and increase physical activity.
- **Countries** to take immediate action to create environments to enable such choices.
- **The media, professionals, associations and civil society** to support public health actions to promote healthy lifestyles.

In its first “*Global report on diabetes*”, WHO highlights the need to step up prevention and treatment of the disease.

**WHO provided more than 100,000 insulin vials to the MoPH. The medications will serve around 500 insulin dependant diabetic patients in need, benefiting from the MoPH essential medications programme at Primary Health Care centers.**

In Lebanon the MoPH and WHO launched in 2012 a pilot initiative to early detect and manage people with NCD including diabetes, and modify behavioral risk factors, such as diet, physical activity and tobacco use. More than 14,000 people have been screened and 2 out of every 5 people were found to be at risk for cardiovascular or diabetes and subsequently referred to health centers for further evaluation and care.

#### Cumulative Notifiable Diseases in Lebanon\*

Disease	2015	2016**	Mar.	Apr.
<b>Vaccine Preventable Diseases</b>				
Polio	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
AFP	75(9)	7 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)
Measles	37(11)	11 (1)	6 (1)	3 (0)
Mumps	1400 (337)	219 (31)	54 (8)	98 (6)
Pertussis	37(6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Rabies	0(0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Rubella	9(1)	2 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Tetanus	3(0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Viral Hep. B	140(22)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
<b>Water/Food Borne Diseases</b>				
Brucellosis	333(57)	43 (11)	12 (2)	6 (1)
Cholera	0(0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Hydatid cyst	14(1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Typhoid fever	473(50)	104 (0)	35 (0)	6 (0)
Viral Hep. A	877(159)	90 (15)	18 (7)	8 (1)
<b>Other Diseases</b>				
Leishmaniasis	32(23)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Meningitis	309(53)	100 (7)	38 (3)	9 (1)
Viral Hep C	65(3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

\*Numbers in brackets refer to Syrian \*\*as of 22 Apr. 2016