
Diabetes

Exposure to secondhand smoke increases risk for Type 2 diabetes

By Helen Albert
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MedWire News: Chronic secondhand smoke exposure significantly increases the risk for Type 2 diabetes, show results from a study of Greek and Cypriot elderly men and women.

"While active smoking is strongly related to the development of diabetes mellitus, the role of exposure to secondhand smoke in the development of diabetes mellitus is unclear," write Demosthenes Panagiotakos (Harokopio University, Athens, Greece) and colleagues in the journal *Diabetic Medicine*.

The researchers recruited 1190 elderly men and women aged 65 years or above from several Greek and Cypriot islands in the Mediterranean during 2005–2007.

The team diagnosed Type 2 diabetes as a fasting plasma glucose of more than 6.1 mmol/l or current use of oral antidiabetic agents. Exposure to secondhand smoke was assessed using a semi-quantitative questionnaire, which documented daily exposure (at least 30 min) and number of years exposure to secondhand smoke.

Following adjustment for possible confounding factors, chronic exposure to secondhand smoke significantly increased the likelihood of having Type 2 diabetes by 63%. Each year of exposure to secondhand smoke was associated with a 2% increased chance of developing the condition after controlling for confounders.

Of note, former smoking, active smoking, and a combination of active and passive smoking showed less significant associations with Type 2 diabetes than passive smoking alone.

"Our findings indicate that chronic exposure to secondhand smoke could be related to the prevalence of diabetes mellitus in elderly individuals, after controlling for lifestyle, dietary habits, and various cardiovascular disease risk factors," conclude Panagiotakos *et al.*

"Nevertheless, further research using longitudinal studies with concurrent biomarker measurement is needed," they add.

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