

Urban diabetes: the case of the metropolitan area of Rome

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Background:

The world is rapidly urbanising, causing alarming health problems to their citizens. The Cities Changing Diabetes programme (www.citieschangingdiabetes.com) aims to address the social factors and cultural determinants that can increase type 2 diabetes (T2D) vulnerability among people living in cities. Cities Changing Diabetes Rome has three core elements: mapping the problem, sharing the learnings and taking action.

Methods:

Public data of Italian Institute for Statistics (ISTAT) and available scientific reports were reviewed and findings integrated to map diabetes and risk factors. The prevalence of T2D in the 8 health districts of Rome was mapped and the correlation between prevalence and social and cultural determinants was assessed.

Results:

Rome has 4.3 million inhabitants. People over 65 has increased by 136,000 units in the last decade, reaching 631,000 citizens in 2015. Elderly people living alone are 28.4%. The obesity prevalence is 9.3% and increased by over 2.0% in the last 10 years; more than 40% of Romans are physically inactive. The prevalence of T2D is 6.6% but it varies in the different 8 health districts between 5.9% and 7.3%. A linear direct correlation exists between the prevalence of diabetes and unemployment rate and use of private transportation rate in the health districts (Pearson R 0.52 and 0.60, respectively), while a linear inverse correlation is found between prevalence of diabetes and aging index, school education level, and slow mobility rate (Person R -0.57, -0.52, and -0.52, respectively).

Conclusions:

Important socio-demographic changes have occurred in Rome during the last decades with a raise in the prevalence of obesity and diabetes. A wide variation exists in the prevalence of T2D among the districts of Rome, associated with social and cultural determinants. This study model can help rethinking diabetes in an urban setting.

Key messages:

- Through the Changing Diabetes Programme, Rome and the other participating cities have new tools to rethink diabetes in an urban setting.
- Data on the association between prevalence of diabetes, social/cultural determinants can help identify the risk factors and the health care services for citizens with/at risk of diabetes.