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Big rise in Americans with diabetes, especially in South

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By [Julie Steenhuysen](#)

CHICAGO (Reuters) - A breakdown of U.S. diabetes cases shows dramatic increases in the number of people diagnosed with diabetes overall between 1995 and 2010, with especially sharp increases among people in the South and in Appalachian states.

According to a study released on Thursday by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of diagnosed cases of diabetes grew by 50 percent or more in 42 U.S. states, and by 100 percent or more in 18 states.

In 2010, 18.8 million Americans had been diagnosed with diabetes and another 7 million had undetected diabetes, according to the CDC.

States with the largest increases over the 16-year period were Oklahoma, up 226 percent; Kentucky, up 158 percent; Georgia, up 145 percent; Alabama, up 140 percent, Washington, up 135 percent, and West Virginia, up 131 percent, according to the study published in CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

"Regionally, we saw the largest increase in diagnosed diabetes prevalence in the South, followed by the West, Midwest, and Northeast," Linda Geiss, a statistician with CDC's Division of Diabetes Translation and lead author of the report, said in a statement.

The findings reinforce data from other studies showing that southern and Appalachian states were experiencing the biggest regional gains in diabetes diagnoses, Geiss said.

Although much of the increase in the number of people diagnosed with diabetes is likely due to more people developing the condition, the study also notes that diabetes treatments have improved, which may mean that more people are living longer with their disease.

Type 2 diabetes, which can be prevented through lifestyle changes, accounts for 90 percent to 95 percent of all diabetes cases in the United States, according to the CDC.

"These rates will continue to increase until effective interventions and policies are implemented to prevent both diabetes and obesity," Ann Albright, director of CDC's Division of Diabetes Translation, said in a statement.

Globally, there are now 371 million people living with diabetes, up from 366 million a year ago, according to the latest report by the International Diabetes Federation, up from 366 million a year ago.

Without significant lifestyle changes, the group projects as many as 552 million will have diabetes by 2030.

(Editing by Cynthia Osterman)

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