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One person drops dead from diabetes every 7 seconds

By Catholic Online (NEWS CONSORTIUM)

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The latest figures unveiled at the European Association for the Study of Diabetes congress in Lisbon are especially sobering. An estimated 366 million people worldwide now suffer from diabetes. Worldwide deaths from the disease are now running at 4.6 million a year.

LOS ANGELES, CA (Catholic Online) - The vast majority of those with the disease have Type 2 diabetes, which is linked to poor diet, obesity and lack of exercise. This wasn't usually the problem in developing nations, but as food, expendable income and more leisure time become available there, more people are developing the condition in poorer countries.

Diabetes can be managed with diet, exercise and medication but chronically high blood sugar levels causes' nerve damage, which can result in kidney disease, blindness and amputation.

A United Nations meeting in New York on September 19-20, the second one to focus on disease after the one on AIDS in 2001 will consider what should be done to counter the growing problem of non-communicable diseases.

Medical experts fear that politicians may not set firm targets or provide funds as food, drink and tobacco companies - and their well-heeled lobbies, are directly responsible for selling products linked to cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

Cash-strapped governments have balked at finding new money, although the cost of inaction may be even greater, with annual healthcare spending on diabetes alone now put at \$465 billion.

"The International Diabetes Federation's latest Atlas data are proof indeed that diabetes is a massive challenge the world can no longer afford to ignore. In 2011 one person is dying from diabetes every seven seconds," said IDF President Jean Claude Mbanya.

The federation called for concrete measures to stop the epidemic, urging officials focusing on chronic diseases at a United Nations meeting next week to commit to specific targets to prevent cases and to invest in more research. Experts also said diabetes care should be integrated into local health clinics.

"The clock is ticking for the world's leaders," Jean Claude Mbanya said in a statement. "We expect action from their meeting next week at the United Nations that will halt diabetes' relentlessly upwards trajectory."

Global sales of diabetes medicines totaled \$35 billion last year and could rise to as much as \$48 billion by 2015, according to research firm IMS Health. There is increased prevalence of the disease in rapidly developing economic powerhouses, such countries as China, India, Mexico and Brazil.

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