



Diabetes: Canada at the Tipping Point The Public Perspective

A NATIONAL SURVEY

Prepared for The Canadian Diabetes Association

Prepared by Environics Research Group

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ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH GROUP

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Introduction

EnviroNics Research Group is pleased to present this report on an online survey of 2,013 adult respondents, including:

- 881 people living with diabetes (139 people living with Type 1 diabetes, 708 people living with Type 2 diabetes, and 34 people living with Gestational diabetes), plus 128 people living with pre-diabetes; and
- 1,004 Canadians (respondents who reported they had not been diagnosed with diabetes or pre-diabetes).

The data generated by these two subsamples are presented separately in this report, so that we can compare those living with diabetes with those who do not.

The surveys were available in English and French. Sample targets were set by region, sex and age to ensure a representative sample. The survey was live between January 25 and 31, 2011.

The survey was designed to explore perceptions, attitudes and experiences related to:

- concern about diabetes as a health issue, both in terms of personal health and its impact on the health care system as a whole, at the current time and in the future;
- the financial and social impact of diabetes;
- the factors contributing to rising diagnosis rates and complications; and
- support for government investment in education about and programs designed to prevent diabetes and in a national strategy to combat obesity.

More details on the methodology used to conduct the survey are available upon request.

The Key Findings of the Survey

The survey results confirm that Canadians are aware that diabetes constitutes an increasingly serious risk for individuals and for society. They are concerned that it presents a threat, not only to their own health and that of their families, but also to the health care system as a whole and to the Canadian economy.

- Among Canadians, four in ten think their own children, or children they may have in the future, are at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and twice that many, eight in ten, believe that Canadian children in general are at increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. Both these levels of concern are considerably higher among people living with diabetes.
- Nine in ten believe diabetes is having a serious impact on the health care system as a whole.
- Six in ten believe diabetes is hurting the Canadian economy.

Among people living with diabetes, the survey finds widespread concern regarding the risk of both major medical complications and their ability to afford the costs associated with managing their disease. Moreover, there is also a sense that they may be discriminated against because of their disease, a fear that may be linked to the widespread awareness of the links between unhealthy lifestyles, and the diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes and its accompanying health complications.

- Eight in ten people living with diabetes believe they are at risk of developing a serious health complication related to their diabetes.
- Six in ten people living with diabetes report an increase in out-of-pocket expenses related to their diabetes.
- Three in ten people living with Type 2 diabetes indicate that there are situations where they would hesitate to reveal they have the disease.

Although Canadians are well aware of the serious and pernicious nature of diabetes, many are not taking the necessary steps to protect their health.

- Six in ten believe diabetes is a *very* serious health condition.
- A total of four in ten Canadians indicate that they have never been tested for Type 2 diabetes or are unsure if they have been tested, and a similar proportion of people living with diabetes report getting checked just once a year or even less often for major medical complications associated with diabetes.

Canadians blame increasing diabetes rates primarily on the failure of individuals to take care of their own health, although there is also a perception that the food industry is at fault and that the cost of a healthy lifestyle is an important contributing factor.

- When Canadians are asked to name the top factors driving increasing diabetes rates across the nation, eight in ten point to the failure of people to take care of their own health and a similar proportion blame the food industry.
- When Canadians are asked to name the top factors contributing to their risk of being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, eight in ten concede that their own decision to live in ways that are less than healthy is the main culprit. However, a similar proportion mention the costs associated with maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- Similarly, when people living with diabetes are asked to name the top factors contributing to their risk of being diagnosed with serious diabetes-related health complications, seven in ten point to their own unhealthy lifestyle decisions and an equal proportion mention the costs associated with maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Extensive awareness of both the seriousness of diabetes, and of the links between the disease and unhealthy lifestyles is reflected in strong support for government action to prevent diabetes in Canada.

- Six in ten Canadians – and seven in ten people living with diabetes – believe governments should be spending more than they are now on education and programs designed to prevent diabetes.
- When Canadians are informed that one in four of their fellow citizens are people living with diabetes or people living with pre-diabetes, support for increased spending rises dramatically to the seven in ten level and to almost eight in ten among people living with diabetes.
- Two-thirds of Canadians strongly support the establishment of a national healthy weights strategy to combat obesity.

More details on these and other findings are presented in the following sections of the report.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Concern about Diabetes

Perceived seriousness

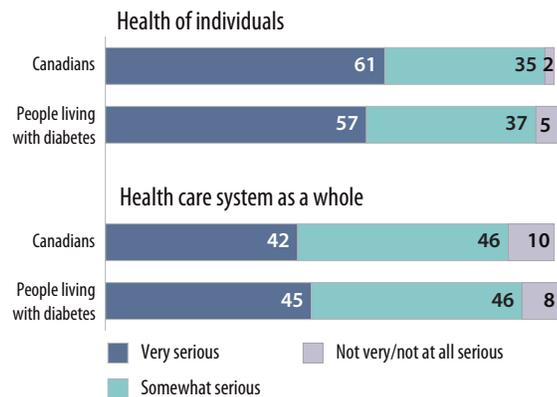
The survey finds broad public awareness of the seriousness of diabetes as a disease, both in terms of its impact on individuals and on the health care system as a whole.

Among Canadians, almost all, 96 percent, say that they consider diabetes to be a serious disease in terms of how it affects the health of individuals. Similar results are found among people living with diabetes.

Among Canadians, the vast majority, 88 percent, say that they consider diabetes to be a serious disease in terms of the impact that it has on the health care system as a whole; just 10 percent dismiss it as not serious. Similar results are found among people living with diabetes.

Perceived seriousness of diabetes as a disease

January 2011



Q.1

How serious of a disease do you consider diabetes to be, in terms of ... how it affects the health of individuals ... the impact that it has on the health care system as a whole?

Personal risk of diagnosis for Canadians

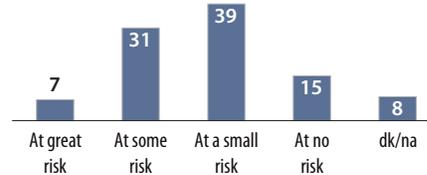
Although Canadians are aware that they are at risk of being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, a significant proportion indicate that they have never been tested.

A total of 38 percent of Canadians believe there is at least some risk that they will develop Type 2 diabetes; 39 percent describe their personal risk of diagnosis as small and 15 percent see no personal risk.

A total of 32 percent of Canadians indicate they get tested for Type 2 diabetes at least once a year; 25 percent report less frequent testing, and a total of 43 percent indicate they have never been tested or are unsure if they've been tested.

Personal risk of diagnosis among Canadians

January 2011



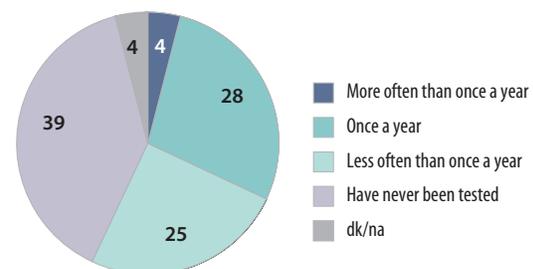
Q.5a

To what extent do you think you are at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes ... ?

Subsample: Canadians not living with diabetes

How often checked for Type 2 diabetes

January 2011



Q.D1

How often do you get checked for Type 2 diabetes?

Subsample: Canadians not living with diabetes

Risk of diagnosis for next generation

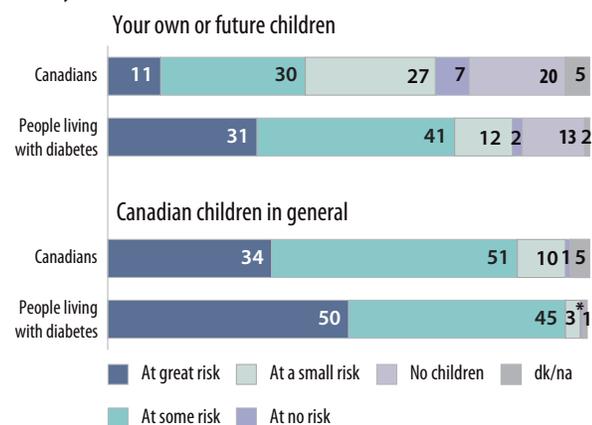
There is widespread awareness of the risk of Type 2 diabetes for future generations.

Among Canadians, 41 percent believe there is at least some risk that the children they have now, or those they might have in the future, will develop Type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives. A much larger proportion, 85 percent, believe that Canadian children in general are at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives.

Not surprisingly, the perception of risk for future generations is even greater among people living with diabetes: 72 percent believe there is at least some risk that the children they have now, or those they might have in the future, will develop Type 2 diabetes and 95 percent believe that Canadian children in general are at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives.

Risk of diagnosis among next generation

January 2011



* Less than one percent

Q.6a

To what extent do you think the children you have now, or those you might have in the future, are at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives ...?

Q.6b

To what extent do you think Canadian children in general are at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes at some point in their lives ...?

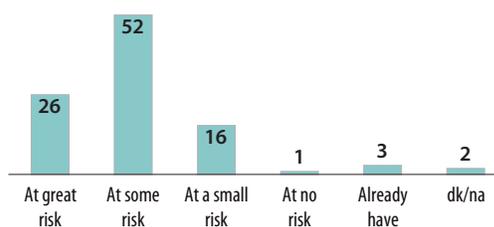
Risk of complications for people living with diabetes

Most people living with diabetes are aware of the risks of developing complications as a result of their diabetes, although a significant proportion indicate they are not tested more than once a year for these health risks.

Three-quarters of people living with diabetes, 78 percent, believe that there is at least some risk that they will develop serious health complications related to their diabetes. However, a noticeably smaller proportion, 61 percent, indicate being tested throughout the year for these complications; 24 percent say they are tested annually and 10 percent say they get tested less frequently. A total of five percent indicate they have never been tested for diabetes-related complications or are unsure if they've been tested.

Risk of complications among people living with diabetes

January 2011



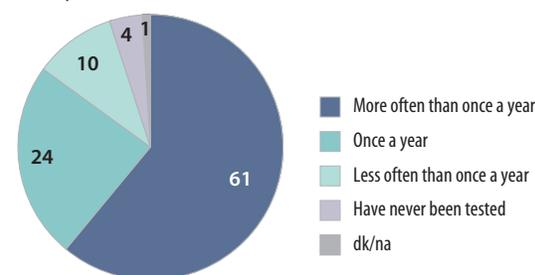
Q.9a

To what extent do you think you are at risk of developing serious health complications related to your diabetes ...?

Subsample: People living with diabetes

How often checked for diabetes-related complications

January 2011



Q.D2

How often do you get checked for diabetes-related complications?

Subsample: People living with diabetes

Impact of diabetes

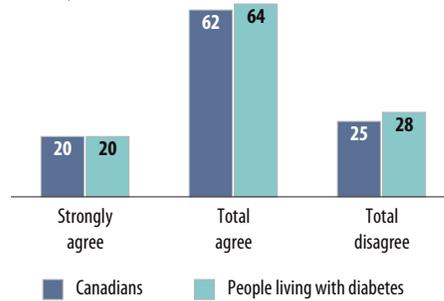
Financial impact of diabetes

Canadians are aware of the negative impact of diabetes on the Canadian economy and, on a personal level, a majority of people living with diabetes report mounting out-of-pocket expenses related to their condition.

A majority of 62 percent of Canadians – and a similar proportion of people living with diabetes – agree with the statement *The cost of diabetes is hurting the Canadian economy*. When people living with diabetes are asked more specifically about the impact of living with diabetes on their personal wallets, 59 percent report that their out-of-pocket expenses related to diabetes are generally increasing; 27 percent say their expenses have remained stable and just 10 percent say they have no such expenses.

Financial impact of diabetes

The cost of diabetes is hurting the Canadian economy
January 2011

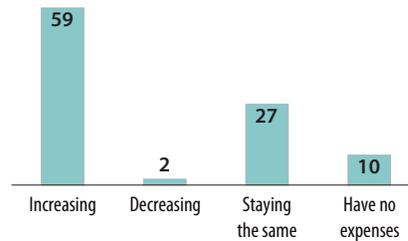


Q.7b

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements ... The cost of diabetes is hurting the Canadian economy?

Impact on personal out-of-pocket expenses for diabetes

January 2011



Q.10

Thinking now about your out-of-pocket expenses related to diabetes (that is, expenses that are not covered under any drug or insurance plan), would you say that these are generally ...?

Subsample: People living with diabetes

Social impact of Type 2 diabetes

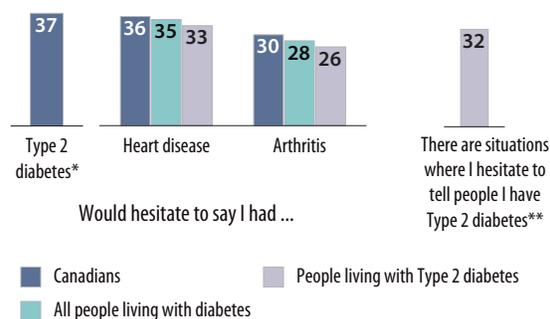
The survey results indicate there is concern that one might be discriminated against as a result of having a chronic condition like Type 2 diabetes.

When Canadians are asked, hypothetically, about whether they would be comfortable telling others that they had Type 2 diabetes, 37 percent indicate that they would hesitate to volunteer that fact about themselves. This proportion is similar to that found among people living with Type 2 diabetes, 32 percent of whom agree with the statement *There are situations where I hesitate to tell people that I have Type 2 diabetes.*

Comparative data indicate that there is slightly less concern about the possibility of social discrimination when people are asked about arthritis than when they are asked about Type 2 diabetes or heart disease.

Social impact of Type 2 diabetes

January 2011



Q.7c-f

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements ... If I had Type 2 diabetes, there are situations where I would hesitate to tell people that fact about myself ... If I had arthritis, there are situations where I would hesitate to tell people that fact about myself ... If I had heart disease, there are situations where I would hesitate to tell people that fact about myself ... There are situations where I hesitate to tell people that I have Type 2 diabetes**?*

* Subsample: Canadians not living with diabetes

** Subsample: People living with diabetes

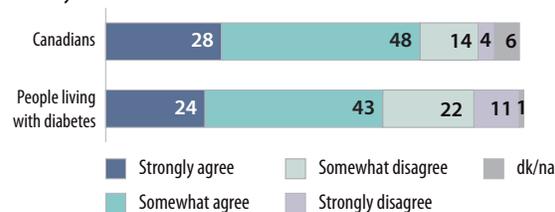
Factors Contributing to Diagnosis Rates and Complications

Personal responsibility for diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes

There is a widespread awareness of the link between Type 2 diabetes and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle.

Three-quarters of Canadians, 76 percent, agree with the statement *The development of Type 2 diabetes is primarily due to the failure of people to take care of their own health.* In contrast, just 13 percent agree with the statement *There is very little that anyone can do to prevent Type 2 diabetes – it’s just the luck of the draw as to whether or not people develop diabetes.* A similar pattern of response is found among people living with diabetes, although they are understandably – but only slightly – less likely to agree with the former statement.

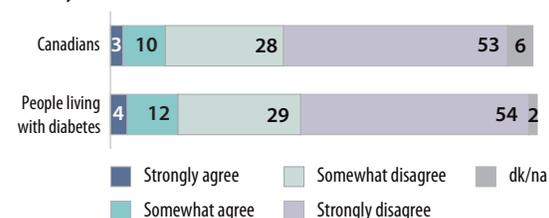
The development of Type 2 diabetes is due to the failure of people to take care of their own health
January 2011



Q.7a

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements ... The development of Type 2 diabetes is primarily due to the failure of people to take care of their own health?

There is very little that anyone can do to prevent Type 2 diabetes – it’s just the luck of the draw
January 2011



Q.7g

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements ... There is very little that anyone can do to prevent Type 2 diabetes – it’s just the luck of the draw as to whether or not people develop diabetes?

Factors driving increasing rates of Type 2 diabetes across Canada

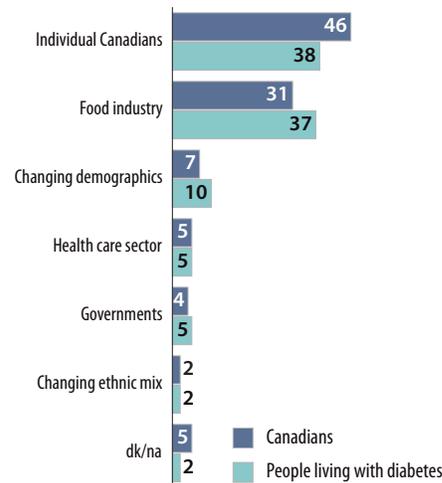
Increasing rates of Type 2 diabetes across Canada are blamed primarily on the failures of individuals to take care of their health and on the food industry.

When Canadians were presented with a number of possible factors that might be responsible for driving up the diagnosis rates of Type 2 diabetes across the country, and asked to choose and rank the top three, the survey once again found strong links between diabetes and personal lifestyles.

The largest proportions, by far, blame the failures of individuals to take care of their own health and that of their families, and/or Canada's food industry (for its advertizing and selling of unhealthy foods that contribute to the development of Type 2 diabetes). Much smaller proportions place the majority of the blame on the nation's changing demographics (an aging Canadian population), the health care sector (for its failure to help patients prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes), governments (for their lack of action to prevent Type 2 diabetes) and/or a changing ethnic mix (the immigration of certain groups who are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes).

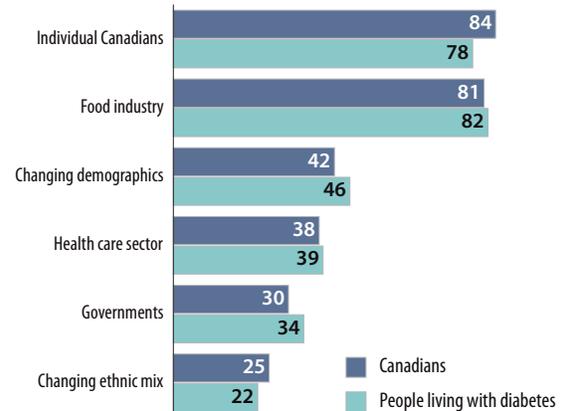
Factors driving increasing rates of Type 2 diabetes across Canada

Most important factor January 2011



Factors driving increasing rates of Type 2 diabetes across Canada

One of top 3 factors January 2011



Q.4

We would now like you to think about the factors that are most responsible for the increasing rates of Type 2 diabetes in Canada. Please choose the top 3 factors and rank them, with "1" for the factor that you think is MOST responsible, "2" for the second most responsible factor, and "3" for the third most important factor ... governments, for their lack of action to prevent Type 2 diabetes ... the food industry, for its advertizing and selling of unhealthy foods that contribute to the development of Type 2 diabetes ... the health care sector, for its failure to help patients prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes ... individual Canadians, who don't take care of their health or that of their children ... changing demographics, with an aging Canadian population ... a changing ethnic mix, with the immigration of certain groups who are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes.

Factors driving personal risk of Type 2 diabetes for Canadians

Personal risk of diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes is also closely linked to personal lifestyle factors, although economic considerations also play an important role.

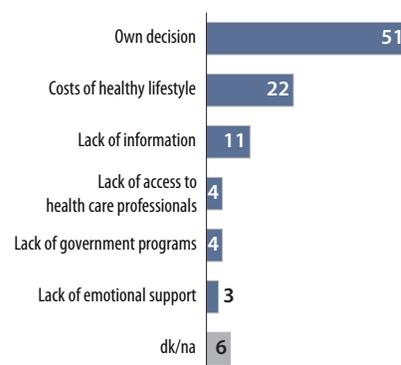
When Canadians were presented with a number of possible factors that might be responsible for them, personally, developing Type 2 diabetes, and asked to choose and rank the top three, the survey once again found widespread awareness of the link between diabetes and personal lifestyles. This time, however, a strong link between a healthy lifestyle and affordability issues also emerged from the data.

Canadians primarily attribute their personal risk of being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes to their own lifestyle decisions. At the same time, it should be noted that they are very likely to also blame the perceived costs associated with a healthy lifestyle (such as the affordability of healthy food and access to exercise programs, etc.).

Canadians are noticeably less likely to associate their personal risk of diagnosis with a lack of information on what they should do to prevent Type 2 diabetes, although five in ten rank this factor in the top three drivers of an increased risk of a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes. Canadians are least likely to feel that their personal risk is correlated with a lack of emotional support to help them develop healthier lifestyles, a lack of government programs to help them prevent Type 2 diabetes, and a lack of access to health care professionals to help them prevent Type 2 diabetes. However, again, it should be noted that approximately three in ten rank one or more of these factors in the top three drivers of an increased risk of a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes.

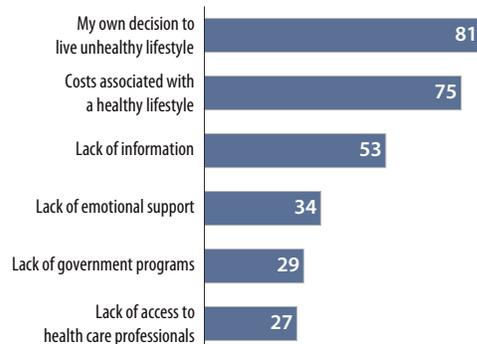
Factors driving personal risk of diagnosis among Canadians

Most important factor January 2011



Factors driving personal risk of diagnosis among Canadians

One of top 3 factors January 2011



Q.5b

For you personally, what would you say are the top 3 factors responsible for your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes? Please choose the top 3 factors and rank them, with "1" for the factor that you think is most responsible, "2" for the second most responsible factor, and "3" for the third most responsible factor ... my own decision to live a lifestyle that is not always healthy ... a lack of emotional support to help me develop a healthier lifestyle ... a lack of information on what I should do to prevent Type 2 diabetes ... a lack of access to health care professionals to help me prevent Type 2 diabetes ... a lack of government programs to help me prevent Type 2 diabetes ... the costs associated with a healthy lifestyle (buying healthy food, exercising, etc.)

Subsample: Canadians who think they are at great, some or small risk of developing Type 2 diabetes

Factors driving risk of complications for people living with diabetes

The risk of developing serious health complications related to diabetes is linked primarily to personal decisions about lifestyle and the perceived costs associated with living a healthy lifestyle.

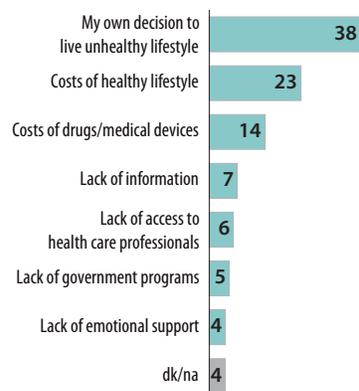
When people living with diabetes were presented with a number of possible factors that might be responsible for them developing serious health complications related to diabetes, and asked to choose and rank the top three, the survey once again found widespread awareness of the link between diabetes and personal lifestyles and the perception that one might not be able to afford a healthy lifestyle.

People living with diabetes primarily attribute their personal risk of being diagnosed with serious diabetes-related health complications to their own failure to adopt healthy lifestyle. However, as was the case with Canadians being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, there appears to be real concern about the affordability of a healthy lifestyle. Moreover, this concern appears to be more pervasive than any concerns about the costs associated with diabetes drugs and medical devices.

People living with diabetes are least likely to associate their personal risk of serious health complications with a lack of information on what they should do to prevent complications, a lack of emotional support to help them develop healthier lifestyles, a lack of government programs to help them prevent complications, and a lack of access to health care professionals to help them prevent complications. At the same time, it should be noted that approximately three in ten rank one or more of these factors in the top three drivers of an increased risk of diabetes-related health complications.

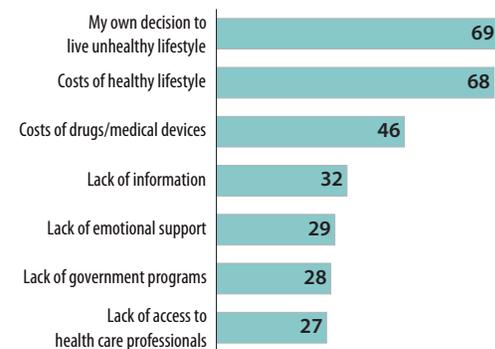
Factors driving risk of complications among people living with diabetes

Most important factor January 2011



Factors driving risk of complications among people living with diabetes

One of top 3 factors January 2011



Q.9b

For you personally, what would you say are the top 3 factors responsible for your risk of developing serious health complications related to your diabetes? Please choose the top 3 factors and rank them, with "1" for the factor that you think is most responsible, "2" for the second most responsible factor, and "3" for the third most responsible factor ... my own decision to live a lifestyle that is not always healthy ... a lack of emotional support to help me develop a healthier lifestyle ... a lack of information on what I should do to prevent complications ... a lack of access to health care professionals to help me prevent complications ... a lack of government programs to help me prevent complications ... the costs associated with a healthy lifestyle (buying healthy food, exercising, etc.) ... the costs associated with diabetes drugs and medical devices.
Subsample: People living with diabetes who think they are at great, some or small risk of developing serious health complications related to their diabetes

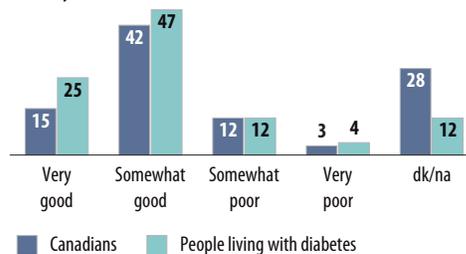
Access to newest and best diabetes medications

Most Canadians feel that their province provides good access to the newest and best diabetes medications; this perception is more prevalent among people living with diabetes than among other Canadians.

A majority of 57 percent of Canadians believe, from what they have heard, that their province provides good access to the newest and best diabetes medications, although 28 percent offer no opinion on the question. Seven in ten people living with diabetes, 72 percent, say that, from their experience, access to diabetes medications is good within their province. The perception that access is good is generally consistent across the provinces.

Access to newest and best diabetes medication

January 2011



Q.8

From your own personal experience or knowledge or from what you have heard, how would you rate access in your province to the newest and best diabetes medications ...?

Support for Government Investment in Diabetes Prevention

Preferred government spending on prevention of diabetes

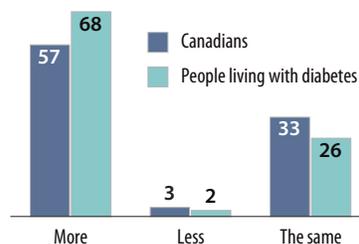
The survey finds widespread public support for increased government investment in education and programs designed to prevent diabetes, especially when Canadians are presented with the fact that one in four have either diabetes or pre-diabetes.

When asked top-of-mind, a majority of 57 percent of Canadians – and 68 percent of people living with diabetes – say governments should be spending more on education and programs designed to prevent diabetes. Virtually no one is in favour of government cutbacks in this area of spending.

When presented with the fact that one in four Canadians have either diabetes or pre-diabetes, support for increased government spending on diabetes prevention rises to 72 percent of Canadians and 77 percent of people living with diabetes.

Preferred government spending on prevention

Support for spending on prevention education and programs
Top-of-mind January 2011

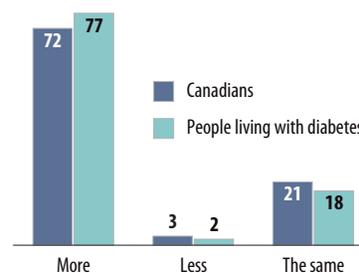


Q.2a

Do you think that governments should be spending more, spending less, or spending the same as they are now on education and programs designed to prevent diabetes?

Preferred government spending on prevention

Support for spending on prevention education and programs
When told 1 in 4 is diabetic or pre-diabetic January 2011



Q.2b

If I told you that, today, it is estimated that one in four Canadians have either diabetes or pre-diabetes, would you say that governments should be spending more, spending less, or spending the same as they are now on programs designed to prevent diabetes?

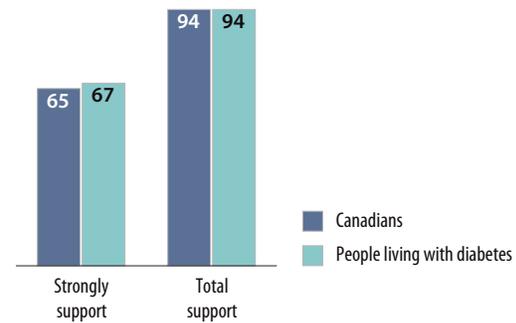
Support for national strategy to combat obesity

Canadians are strongly supportive of a national strategy to combat obesity and encourage healthy weights among all Canadians.

Virtually all Canadians support the federal, provincial and territorial governments implementing a national strategy to combat obesity and encourage healthy weights among all Canadians. What is striking is that two-thirds *strongly* support such an initiative.

Support for national strategy to combat obesity

January 2011



Q.3

Considering both the costs of diabetes to the health care system and the costs of setting up national programs, do you support the federal, provincial and territorial governments implementing a national strategy to combat obesity and encourage healthy weights among all Canadians?