75% of Diabetics Are Affected by Body Image Issues Including Diabulimia, Anorexia and Binge Eating

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A recent survey on self-image and diabetes conducted by global diabetes community, Diabetes.co.uk, revealed that over 87% of respondents had experienced symptoms of diabetes related eating disorders, such as diabulimia. The survey by Europe's largest patient to patient forum shows that nearly three quarters (72%) of respondents are affected by body image issues, however, only one in ten (12%) have sought professional help. Nearly all respondents (97%) believe that more could be done in order to raise awareness of diabulimia. Over 500 respondents with type 1 and type 2 diabetes took part in this survey.

What is diabulimia?

Although it has not been officially recognised as a medical condition, diabulimia is a type of eating disorder that affects people with diabetes, most commonly type 1 diabetes. It has been predicted by experts that as many as one-third of young female diabetics could be suffering as a result of this condition. Diabetics will purposely reduce their insulin level in order to lose weight. Although diabulimia is generally associated with the use of insulin, an individual with diabetes may also suffer from an eating disorder as well.

Physical and emotional effects of having to manage type 1 diabetes can contribute to the increased risk of diabulimia, as well as depression, anxiety and poor body image.

Neglecting the body from insulin can be very dangerous and can cause serious health risks, such as:

- High glucose levels
- Fatigue
- Dehydration
- Wearing of the muscle tissue
- Diabetic Ketoacidosis

Long-term, the symptoms are the same as badly managed diabetes, and can lead to retinopathy, neuropathy, kidney failure and even death.

Charlotte Summers, COO of Diabetes.co.uk comments:
"Diabulimia is a serious condition that often gets overlooked. Being diagnosed with diabetes can have a serious impact on self-image. For people with type 1 diabetes, the stress of injecting can have a detrimental effect; whilst in people with type 2 diabetes, the negative portrayal of diabetes in the media causes anxiety and a lack of self-esteem. It is something that affects both men and women and requires more awareness and research in order to determine the best way to address the emotional impact of diabetes."

-Ends-

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Editor's Notes:

- 500 respondents took part in the survey; 52% type 1, 46% type 2 and 2% other.
- Diabetes.co.uk is the largest patient diabetes community in Europe with over 128,000 forum members affected by diabetes.
- Founders of a ground-breaking diabetes management programme for those with Type 2, allowing users to self-monitor blood glucose levels and take control of the condition. For more information on the type 2 blood glucose testing revolution, visit www.type2testing.com.
- Download the Apps; Diabetes Forum and diabetes management system DiabetesPA.

To find out more please visit www.diabetes.co.uk or follow us on social media; Facebook – Diabetes.co.uk and Twitter @Diabetescouk.

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