Diabetes study reveals risks for young

Young people with type 2 diabetes have a higher risk of cardiovascular disease and mortality when compared to those with type 1 diabetes, a new study has found.

This means that prevention, early identification and treatment in young people diagnosed with the condition is now more important than ever.

A research team led by Associate Professor Jencia Wong and Professor Dennis Yue from the Diabetes Centre at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital examined the long term outcomes of 354 patients with early onset type 2 diabetes diagnosed between the ages of 15 and 30. These patients were compared to 470 patients with type 1 diabetes diagnosed at the same age.

Associate Professor Wong said the study was prompted by the increasing numbers of young patients with type 2 diabetes coming through the doors at the Diabetes Centre.

“Until recently, type 2 diabetes has been considered a lifestyle disease of mature people and less serious than insulin dependent type 1 diabetes,” Associate Professor Wong said.

“After following-up information from the last 20 years, the reality for young people with type 2 diabetes is grave, with at least double the risk of death compared to those with type 1 diabetes.

“Cardiovascular problems were found to be the leading cause of death and occurred after a much shorter duration of diabetes than those with type 1. We also found that vascular risk factors were higher in these young patients, even within a few years of diagnosis,” Associate Professor Wong said.

“With increasing numbers of young people with type 2 diabetes, a greater emphasis is needed on education about healthy lifestyle choices, prevention and early treatment to reduce the risks and importantly prevent death in young people,” she said.

The study has been published online on the Diabetes Care Journal website, an American Diabetes Association publication.

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