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The research topics that matter most to Australians affected by diabetes

A new report released today by the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes (ACBRD), highlights the research that matters most to Australians living with diabetes. The *Diabetes Research Matters* project amplifies the voices of the 1.5 million Australians living with diabetes, and the valuable insights can be used to inform future diabetes research.

While researchers and funding bodies typically decide on research topics, in this study Australians affected by all types of diabetes were asked what research they believe is most important to improve their health and quality of life. The project team included people with lived experience of diabetes.

More than 650 people with type 1, type 2, gestational, less common types of diabetes and family members participated in this comprehensive national project.

More than 1,500 responses were collected and collated into 125 research questions across 25 common themes. Follow up surveys revealed which of these research priorities are most important to the diabetes community, including:

- How can diabetes technologies be improved to make diabetes management easier, more effective, more accessible, better integrated with other devices, more environmentally friendly?
(#1 research priority for people with type 1 diabetes and the family members of people with diabetes)
- How can insulin resistance be reversed and the body's normal response to glucose be restored?
(#1 research priority for people with type 2 diabetes)
- What are the short-term and long-term impacts of gestational diabetes on the baby/child? (#1 research priority for people with gestational diabetes)
- What is the link between diabetes and other health conditions e.g. other autoimmune disorders, PCOS?
(#1 research priority for people with less common types of diabetes)
- What are the causes or triggers of diabetes?
(Top #5 research priority for people with diabetes of all types and family members)

Over 300 Australians develop diabetes every day, making it the fastest growing chronic condition in the country.

While the number of Australians living with diabetes has increased by 32% in the past decade, funding for diabetes research has declined by 30% over the same period. This



The Australian Centre
for Behavioural Research
in Diabetes

means less diabetes research being conducted in Australia, fewer researchers specialising in diabetes, and less progress in many areas important to people living with diabetes.

“Diabetes is a complex and relentless condition that requires 24/7 management and significantly impacts health and wellbeing,” says Dr Elizabeth Holmes-Truscott, Senior Research Fellow at the ACBRD.

“Funding research to find a cure for all types of diabetes is critical, but research is also needed to identify how to best support the day-to-day health and wellbeing of Australians living with the condition.

“People with diabetes and their family members have clear views about the research that matters to them.

“Ultimately, it is people with diabetes who are also most affected by diabetes research outcomes, and we hope the insights from *Diabetes Research Matters* will influence future research priorities in Australia.

The project lead, Dr Christel Hendrieckx (Deputy Director, ACBRD), says: “Given the steady decline in funding for diabetes research, it is even more vital that we research the topics that will deliver the most relevant and useful outcomes for the diabetes community.

“Community engagement and working in partnership with people with lived experience in research is pivotal to achieving this goal.”

Read more key insights from *Diabetes Research Matters* at www.diabetesresearchmatters.com

The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes is a partnership for better health between Diabetes Victoria and Deakin University. For more information, visit: www.acbrd.org.au Contact: info@acbrd.org.au

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