

Improving Each Additional Lifestyle Factor Further Reduces the Risk for Diabetes

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The full report is titled "Lifestyle Factors and Risk for New-Onset Diabetes. A Population-Based Cohort Study." It is in the 6 September 2011 issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine* (volume 155, pages 292-299). The authors are J.P. Reis, C.M. Loria, P.D. Sorlie, Y. Park, A. Hollenbeck, and A. Schatzkin.

What is the problem and what is known about it so far?

Although we know that improvements in individual lifestyle factors delay or prevent the onset of diabetes, we know less about how combinations of these factors affect diabetes.

Why did the researchers do this particular study?

To study the effects of combinations of lifestyle factors on diabetes by using data collected by different researchers for an unrelated study.

Who was studied?

More than 100 000 men and almost 100 000 women who did not have heart disease, cancer, or diabetes and were aged 50 to 71 years when they entered the original study in 1995 and 1996.

How was the study done?

When participants entered the original study, the researchers asked them about their weight, height, physical activity, diet, smoking, and alcohol use. When that study ended 10 years later, the researchers asked the participants whether a doctor outside the study had told them they had diabetes. The researchers for the current study used this information to measure the association between lifestyle factors that were present at the beginning of the study and the onset of diabetes.

What did the researchers find?

During the original study, 10% of men and almost as many women developed diabetes. Persons with the best lifestyle factors were about 80% less likely to develop diabetes than those with the worst lifestyle factors, and the risk for diabetes decreased with each additional good lifestyle factor.

What were the limitations of the study?

It is uncertain whether lifestyle factors, as opposed to other factors caused the reduction in risk, because this study did not examine every possible factor.

What are the implications of the study?

Improvements in multiple lifestyle factors might substantially reduce the risk for diabetes.

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