

METABOLIC SYNDROME IS A TICKING TIMEBOMB, WARNS EXPERT

Imperial College London's genetic research tackles early detection of diabetes

(For more information log on to www.icldc.ae)



Abu Dhabi, September 2007: A leading medical specialist has warned UAE health professionals about the certain onset of Metabolic Syndrome.

Professor Philippe Froguel, Chair in Genomic Medicine, Division of Medicine Imperial College London, told the audience at the recent Primary Health Forum 2007 (in Abu Dhabi), that, simply put, the Metabolic Syndrome is a constellation of risk factors.

He said that these factors significantly increase a person's likelihood of developing diabetes, amongst other life threatening complications, such as cardiovascular disease and stroke.

“The rising prevalence of the Metabolic Syndrome needs to be tackled with urgency in order to prevent a public health catastrophe,” he stressed.

It is suggested that the huge costs of treating subsequent diseases will place a huge strain on health services and subsequently the economy.

The prevalence of obesity in the Middle East is high - an average of 6% in children, rising to 20% in adolescent males and to a further 32% in elderly patients.

Estimates place between 10-20% of men and 10-25% of women as obese and by the year 2010 these figures are likely to double.

“Obesity and type 2 diabetes have become global epidemics over recent times bringing in their wake a number of disease risk factors,” Professor Froguel said.

According to Froguel, these disorders are the tip of the iceberg, being just two manifestations of Metabolic Syndrome, thought to affect an estimated 19.5% of the adult population in countries such as the UAE.

Froguel’s team have identified the first gene for Type 2 diabetes and several others. The group has also completed several genome scans which have revealed several loci linked to diabetes.

“Associations linking specific genetic makeup (genotype) and enzyme function or protein activity (phenotype) to disease outcome have been explored extensively, and it is clear that individual geno-phenotype can play a role in disease susceptibility,” said Froguel.

Individual susceptibility to environmental exposures combined with specific genetic traits and other factors produce the disease, and the nature of these multi-factorial, gene-environment interactions is likely to change throughout an individual’s life.

(For more detailed information on ICLDC please log on to www.icldc.ae).

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Notes to the Editor

About Imperial College London Diabetes Centre

The Imperial College London Diabetes Centre is a state-of-the-art specialized out-patient clinic dedicated to help detect, prevent and treat diabetes. The centre is a one-stop-facility that specializes in Diabetes Treatment, Research, Training and Public Health. Located in Abu Dhabi (next to the Zayed Military Hospital), ICLDC allows the highest level of specialized patient care, from first diagnosis to the continued management of all complications associated with diabetes.

Imperial College London holds a renowned history and expertise in the study of diabetes, bringing one of the leading medical academic institutions in the world to Abu Dhabi as a core working partner. Under ICLDC practices, one of the Centre's primary objectives will be to provide continuing education for health professionals and the general public. For more details visit: www.icldc.ae

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