

Diabetes mellitus

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VFwF e.V.

Besuch eines Medical Center in der Bronx/ New York City

- Begin on the sixth floor, third room from the end, swathed in fluorescence: a 60-year-old woman was having two toes sawed off. One floor up, corner room: a middle-aged man sprawled, recuperating from a kidney transplant. Next door: nerve damage. Eighth floor, first room to the left: stroke. Two doors down: more toes being removed. Next room: a flawed heart.

Zukunftsszenario

- Within a generation or so, doctors fear, a huge wave of new cases could overwhelm the public health system and engulf growing numbers of the young, creating a city where hospitals are swamped by the disease's handiwork, schools scramble for resources as they accommodate diabetic children, and the work force abounds with the blind and the halt.

Eine unbemerkte Epidemie?

- The prospect is frightening, but it has gone largely unnoticed outside public health circles. As epidemics go, diabetes has been a quiet one, provoking little of the fear or the prevention efforts inspired by AIDS or lung cancer.

Eine Epidemie mit stillem Beginn

- In its most common form, diabetes, which allows excess sugar to build up in the blood and exact ferocious damage throughout the body, retains an outdated reputation as a relatively benign sickness of the old. Those who get it do not usually suffer any symptoms for years, and many have a hard time believing that they are truly ill

...noch eine „Alterskrankheit“?

- One in three children born in the United States five years ago are expected to become diabetic in their lifetimes, according to a projection by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The forecast is even bleaker for Latinos: one in every two.

Migration und Diabetes

- It is a city of immigrants, where newcomers eating American diets for the first time are especially vulnerable. It is also yielding to the same forces that have driven diabetes nationally: an aging population, a food supply spiked with sugars and fats, and a culture that promotes overeating and discourages exercise.

Wer ist betroffen?

- Even those who do not get diabetes will eventually feel it, experts say - in time spent caring for relatives, in higher taxes and insurance premiums, and in public spending diverted to this single illness.

Kreuzzüge...?

- Type 2 can often be postponed and possibly prevented by eating less and exercising more. But getting millions of people to change their behavior, he said, will require some kind of national crusade.

„Public“ Health

- Yet for years, public health authorities around the country have all but ignored chronic illnesses like diabetes, focusing instead on communicable diseases, which kill far fewer people. New York, with its ambitious and highly praised public health system, has just three people and a \$950,000 budget to outwit diabetes, a disease soon expected to afflict more than a million people in the city.

„Old“ Public Health

- Tuberculosis, which infected about 1,000 New Yorkers last year, gets \$27 million and a staff of almost 400.

Fehlende Aufmerksamkeit?

- 20 years from now people will look back and say: 'What were they thinking? They're in the middle of an epidemic and kids are watching 20,000 hours of commercials for junk food.' "

Gene und Umwelt...

- What is especially disturbing about the rise of Type 2 is that it can be delayed and perhaps prevented with changes in diet and exercise. For although both types are believed to stem in part from genetic factors, Type 2 is also spurred by obesity and inactivity. This is particularly true in those prone to the illness. Plenty of fat, slothful people do not get diabetes. And some thin, vigorous people do.

Folgeschäden vermeiden

- Yet medical experts believe that most diabetes-related amputations are preventable with scrupulous care, and that is why the offices of conscientious doctors post signs like this: "All patients with diabetes: Don't forget to bare your feet each visit."

Der ganzheitliche Blick auf D.M.

- Little about diabetes is straightforward, and to comprehend why New York is such an incubator for the disease, it is necessary to grasp that diabetes is as much a sociological and anthropological story as a medical one. While it assaults all classes, ages and ethnic groups, it is inextricably bound up with race and money.

D.M. und soziale Lage

- Diabetes bears an inverse relationship to income, for poverty usually means less access to fresh food, exercise and health care. New York's poverty rate, 20.3 percent, is much higher than the nation's, 12.7 percent.

Migration und soziale Lage

- African-Americans and Latinos, particularly Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, incur diabetes at close to twice the rate of whites. More than half of all New Yorkers are black or Hispanic, and the Hispanic population is growing rapidly, as it is around the nation.

Nochmals: Gene und Umwelt

- But the velocity of new cases among all races has accelerated significantly from just a few decades ago. Genetics cannot explain this surge, because the human gene pool does not change that fast. Instead, the culprit is thought to be behavior: faulty diet and inactivity. Dr. Vinicor, of the Centers for Disease Control, likes to use this expression: "Genetics may load the cannon, but human behavior pulls the trigger"

Epidemiologische Studie des CDC

- C.D.C. studies suggest that about 60 percent stem from demographic changes: a population increasingly comprising older people and ethnic groups with a higher risk.

CDC –Studie -2-

- The studies ascribe the other 40 percent to lifestyle changes: the fundamental shift that has people eating jumbo meals and shunning exercise as if it were illegal. At every turn, technology has made physical activity unnecessary or unappealing. Gym class has largely been deleted from schools. Fewer than a third of junior high schools require physical education at all, the C.D.C. says.

Plausibilität – „gesunder Menschenverstand“

- If changes in daily living can bring on diabetes, they can also delay it, though it is uncertain for how long.

D.M. und Berufswelt

- For instance, no one with diabetes can join the military, though service members whose disease is diagnosed after enlisting can sometimes stay. No insulin-dependent diabetic can become a commercial pilot.

Diskriminierung in der Arbeitswelt

- Shereen Arent, director of legal advocacy for the American Diabetes Association, says she already fields 150 calls a month from diabetics who complain that they are being discriminated against in the workplace, double the number just a couple of years ago. She mentioned a typical case, a man rejected for a job at a baked-bean factory in Texas as a safety risk

Herausforderungen für Schule

- Most schools do not have full-time nurses. Some public schools, Ms. Arent said, try to turn away children with diabetes, even though that is illegal. Others ban them from field trips and sports teams. And this is now, when diabetes is still relatively rare among children.

Umgang mit der „Wahrheit“

- "A lot of them are in denial," Dr. St. Louis said. "They have blood sugars of 300, 400, and they tell me right to my face they don't have diabetes. 'You're wrong,' they say. 'I don't feel anything.' I tell them what can happen down the road, and they shrug. A 15-year-old doesn't care what's going to happen at 35 or 45. A 15-year-old is immortal."

Verhaltensänderung als Ziel

- "They have 10,000 excuses why they can't do something," the doctor said. "So you have to give them ideas and then hope."

Potenziale der Prävention

- A federal program studied people around the country at high risk of getting diabetes, and concluded that 58 percent of new cases could be postponed by shifts in behavior - most notably, shedding pounds