

A third of Australians living with diabetes feel like ‘robots’ monitoring their blood glucose levels

- **EXPERTS SAY BLOOD GLUCOSE MONITORING ‘BURN OUT’ IS A BARRIER TO OPTIMAL SELF-MANAGEMENT OF DIABETES MANAGEMENT**
- **MORE FREEDOM AND FLEXIBILITY NEEDED, AS CURRENT GLUCOSE MONITORING METHODS NEGATIVELY IMPACT QUALITY OF LIFE**

DONCASTER, Melbourne, XX, 2016 — A new survey has found that blood glucose monitoring methods leave 30% of Australian adults living with type 1 and insulin-treated type 2 diabetes feeling like “robots” and the majority indicating they would like their ideal glucose monitoring device to offer more freedom and flexibility.

The *YourSAY: Glucose Monitoring Survey* commissioned by Abbott, in partnership with JDRF and Diabetes Australia, provides valuable insights from over 700 respondents living with diabetes. They shared their attitudes towards blood glucose monitoring and daily experiences of diabetes self-management.

Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic condition in Australia, with 280 Australians developing diabetes every dayⁱ. Managing diabetes can often feel intrusive, particularly when it involves checking blood glucose levels, on average, six times a day (reported by respondents with type 1 diabetes) or three times a day (reported by those with type 2 diabetes using insulin).

The YourSAY survey reveals that only half of respondents feel that their current method of glucose monitoring gives them “freedom in everyday life” (51% for people with type 1 and 54% for people with type 2 diabetes) and highlights the need to overcome the barriers to glucose monitoring amongst Australians living with diabetes.

Diabetes Australia CEO, Greg Johnson, knows how important glucose monitoring is to manage diabetes, however it’s not always that easy for individuals.

“In reality, glucose monitoring can be difficult and intrusive,” said Professor Johnson, “Greater understanding of the attitudes and needs of people living with diabetes will help to identify better ways to support their self-management of this challenging condition.”

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“New technology and innovative solutions to glucose monitoring that address any barriers will enable people to better manage their diabetes with less risk of serious complications and hospitalisations. It could also enable them to work better with their healthcare team to establish more manageable and personalised care plans and targets.”

People with diabetes feel monitoring “burn out”

The *YourSAY* survey revealed an overall feeling of blood glucose monitoring ‘burn out’. Often, the burden of long term diabetes management can result in feelings of distress, and lack of motivation towards diabetes management.

“Over 60% of adults living with diabetes are simply tired of having to check their blood glucose levels,” said Professor Jane Speight, Foundation Director of The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes

The majority of respondents indicated they don’t always check their blood glucose as recommended by their health professional (60% of people with type 1 and 63% of people with type 2 diabetes) and wish they could take time off from their blood glucose monitoring (79% of people with type 1 and 60% with type 2 diabetes).

Professor Speight said that the survey also showed that “for many people, their current glucose monitoring method is not offering them freedom in life, is messy (46% of respondents with type 1 and 30% with type 2 diabetes) or not discreet. In fact, people reported that checking glucose had a negative impact at work, when travelling and during intimacy,” said Professor Speight.

“These findings should not be dismissed because we know that when quality of life is impaired by diabetes self-management tasks, then people have to make tough choices about what is more important to them,” said Professor Speight.

Checking glucose levels affects travel, work and dating life

The *YourSAY* survey revealed some interesting insights into how diabetes management impacts upon the personal and professional life of adults living with diabetes:

- Almost half of respondents said that checking their blood glucose levels becomes a problem when they are travelling or on the move (47% of respondents with type 1 and 49% with type 2 diabetes).
- Two in five people living with type 1 diabetes (41%) reported that checking glucose levels makes the working day more demanding (compared to 14% of people living with type 2 diabetes).
- Less than half of people felt that their current method of monitoring was discreet (38% of respondents with type 1 diabetes and 49% for type 2 diabetes).
- 28% of type 1 and 15% of type 2 respondents said that checking blood glucose levels interferes with their dating or their sex life.

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Balancing reassurance against burden

While many people desire a break from monitoring, the majority of *YourSAY* respondents did agree that monitoring reassures them (81% of respondents with type 1 diabetes and 74% with type 2 diabetes) and gives an accurate snapshot of their glucose levels (78% of respondents with type 1 diabetes and 79% for type 2 diabetes).

Mike Wilson, CEO and Managing Director at JDRF, said “We know that glucose monitoring provides reassurance for people living with type 1 diabetes. That information is essential for critical insulin dosing decisions and also gives some peace of mind, helping to manage the worries associated with low or high glucose levels.”

“Even with close monitoring, diabetes is a substantial daily burden for many and unfortunately, there are no days off when it comes to managing your diabetes,” said Mike.

New monitoring options would be welcomed

Aside from helping them to maintain their target blood glucose levels, survey participants preferred their ‘ideal’ glucose monitoring device to have characteristics that offered freedom and flexibility.

Participants said their ‘ideal’ device would mean no longer having to interrupt activities to do a check (69% of respondents with type 1 diabetes and 52% with type 2 diabetes); not needing to carry monitoring supplies (61% of respondents with type 1 diabetes and 53% with type 2 diabetes); or no longer have to prick their finger (64% of respondents with type 1 and diabetes 62% with type 2 diabetes).

About the *YourSAY: Glucose Monitoring Study*

YourSAY (Self-Management And You) is a series of online surveys about what it’s like to manage and live with diabetes. The '*YourSAY: Glucose Monitoring*' study focused specifically on blood glucose monitoring, investigating behaviours, attitudes towards and barriers/facilitators of glucose monitoring among Australian adults with type 1 or insulin-treated type 2 diabetes.

The survey was completed by 704 Australian adults, aged 18-70 years, who were either diagnosed with type 1 diabetes or type 2 diabetes, and currently using insulin therapy (injections or a pump), and not currently using a continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) device. The survey was open over six weeks (Sept - Oct 2015). The final eligible sample included: 592 adults with type 1 diabetes and 112 with insulin-treated type 2 diabetes.

The survey was hosted online (www.yoursay.org.au) and recruitment was led by Diabetes Australia and JDRF. The data were analysed independently by The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes, a partnership for better health between Diabetes Victoria and Deakin University.

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About Abbott:

Abbott is committed to helping people living with diabetes live the best possible life through the power of health. For more than 125 years, Abbott has brought new products and technologies to the world—in nutrition, diagnostics, medical devices and branded generic pharmaceuticals—that create more possibilities for more people at all stages of life. Today, 74,000 Abbott employees are working to help people live not just longer, but better, in the more than 150 countries we serve.

Abbott's diabetes care unit in Australia provides a range of glucose monitoring solutions for people with diabetes, including blood glucose monitors and flash glucose monitoring.

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ⁱ <https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/about-diabetes> (date accessed 16 March 2016)