

## Is Diabetes Increasing Among Ethnic People

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Globally diabetes mellitus is considered a fearful health problem. Previously diabetes was thought to be a disease of developed countries but now it is common in both developing and developed countries with various complications. A report by the World Health Organization predicted 79.4 million diabetic patients by the year 2030. Prevalence of diabetes in Bangladesh is also high and urban people are affected more than rural ones. Faulty diet and sedentary life style are important contributing factors in this increasing trend. There are 45 tribal groups in Bangladesh and they constitute 1% of the total population. Among them, Chakma, the largest ethnic group consist of 4,44,748 people while Marma, the second largest group compares with 2,02,974 person. Khashia, Jaintia, Santal, Garo, Manipuri, Tripura, Tanchangya, Mro (Mru or Moorang) are the other tribal groups in Bangladesh. Some ethnic groups live in plain land but the majority of the tribal groups live in hilly area. Primitive agricultural practices and diverse life style make them an important focus of research. They have gradually become used to Bengali food. Over the years, displacement and acculturation of the tribal communities have brought about dramatic changes in their lifestyles and value systems. Isolation from mainstream development activities, together with a high level of poverty and difficult accessibility to the existing health facilities, make the tribal communities specifically vulnerable to various health problems. Despite the wealth of studies on health and healthcare-seeking behavior among the Bengali population in Bangladesh, relatively few studies have focused specifically on the tribal groups in the country. Crude prevalence of type 2 diabetes has been found to be 6.6% and IFG 8.5% among the tribal people in the Khagrachari district. We usually know the tribal people to be hard working and their physical activities level are high enough to prevent diabetes. But questions arise about their dietary habits. This is an area which needs to be researched. Lack of information, diverse socio-cultural practice and dependency on nature are the barriers of research. It is concluded that epidemiological study on diabetes among ethnic groups residing in the plain land as well as hilly riverine forest area is urgently needed to determine the exact situation. Cooperation from tribal leaders is essential to make this successful. Donor agency can come forward in this regard.

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