

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

EMPOWERING JOHANNESBURG'S YOUNG PEOPLE TO BEND THE CURVE ON DIABETES

South Africa has a growing obesity challenge, with more than half the country's adults estimated to be overweight or living with obesity.⁵⁵ The pervasive nature of the epidemic can be seen in the younger generation, with more than 11% of children living with obesity, the highest prevalence being among girls.⁵⁶ This potentially places the burden of non-communicable diseases on future generations.

IT IS PREDICTED THAT
28.2%
OF CHILDREN WILL BE LIVING
WITH OBESITY BY 2030⁵⁶

DIABETES AWARENESS IN SCHOOLS

In 2017, the Johannesburg Junior City Council – one of the Cities Changing Diabetes partners – initiated a programme to increase diabetes awareness and education in schools. Through this campaign, which has reached close to 3,000 children, the young councillors hope to influence not only children, but also their families. The councillors were initially provided with training on type 2 diabetes by the Novo Nordisk team in South Africa.

The campaign takes the form of a one-off performance on the theme of

diabetes by young people, in a style and language that the schoolchildren can relate to. It helps children to understand the seriousness of the disease and why it is important for those living with the disease – including parents and siblings – to manage it correctly. The performers are accompanied by a medical professional who can answer any questions that the children may have. The children are also given examples of healthy meals and exercise options, and are encouraged to share this information with their friends and families.

BUILDING CAPACITY TO REDUCE THE BURDEN OF COMPLICATIONS

Another focus of the programme is the ongoing training of nurses at selected clinics to improve the diagnosis and treatment of diabetes. It is estimated that more than half of people with diabetes are undiagnosed and are therefore not receiving treatment. This puts them at high risk of developing diabetes-related complications.

EXPLORING LOCAL VULNERABILITY AND DIABETES RISK DRIVERS

In 2020, the Cities Changing Diabetes partners in Johannesburg will commence new research into the risk factors that make people more vulnerable to diabetes. This research is being conducted at six clinics in Johannesburg.

LOCAL PROGRAMME PARTNERS

City of Johannesburg

University of the Witwatersrand
(Wits)

Johannesburg Junior Council

Gauteng Department of Health

"Even though we've been working with communities for years, every day is different, especially when it comes to working with these young people. They have the most creative ideas on how we can educate their peers about diabetes and obesity. It's great to see how they find the sessions fun whilst they also learn and share so much with their families."

Layla Campbell, operational manager, Health Promotion, City of Johannesburg

IN SOUTH AFRICA

13.3%
OF INFANTS ARE
OVERWEIGHT⁵⁶

ALMOST
4.6 MILLION
ADULTS ARE LIVING
WITH DIABETES²



Johannesburg,
South Africa