

Congenital hyperinsulinism (HI) is the most frequent cause of severe, persistent hypoglycemia in newborn babies, infants, and children. In most countries it occurs in approximately 1/25,000 to 1/50,000 births. About 60% of babies with HI are diagnosed during the first month of life. An additional 30% will be diagnosed later in the first year and the remainder after that. With early treatment and aggressive prevention of hypoglycemia, brain damage can be prevented. However, brain damage can occur in children with HI if the condition is not recognized or if treatment is ineffective in the prevention of hypoglycemia. It is often difficult to identify symptoms of HI because they are often confused with typical behaviors of newborns and infants. Common symptoms include irritability, sleepiness, lethargy, excessive hunger and rapid heart rate. More severe symptoms, such as seizures and coma, can occur with a prolonged or extremely low blood sugar level. Common symptoms of low blood sugar in older children and adults include feelings of shakiness, weakness, or tiredness, confusion and rapid pulse. More severe symptoms include seizures or coma. HI affects both males and females and has been reported in many countries. In most countries it occurs in approximately 1/25,000 to 1/50,000 births.