**Sitting time is a diabetes risk factor for UK South Asians**

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A new study by scientists has revealed that time spent sitting down is a diabetes risk factor in South Asians independent of how much they exercise.

Approximately one-quarter of UK South Asians over the age of 55 have type 2 diabetes.

The study, conducted by researchers from the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, screened 1,228 South Asians of Indian and Pakistani descent for blood glucose levels, waist size, time spent sitting down and physical activity levels.

A high concentration of glucose in the blood is, depending on the level, indicative of diabetes or an increased risk for the disease.

The results revealed a close relationship between high levels of blood glucose and time spent sitting down, independent of time spent in physical activity and of waist circumference.

Dr Jason Gill, of the Institute of Cardiovascular and Medical Sciences at the University of Glasgow who led the study, said: “South Asians living in the UK have a three-to-five-fold increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes and develop the disease approximately 10 years before white Europeans.

“It is well known that carrying too much fat, particularly around the waist, increases risk of developing adult-onset diabetes, as does a lack of physical activity, but this is the first time that time spent simply sitting down has been shown to be an independent and significant risk factor for diabetes in a population of South Asian origin.”

The study was run under the Prevention of Type-2 Diabetes and Obesity in South Asians (PODOSA) trial, led by Professor Raj Bhopal at the University of Edinburgh.

Prof Bhopal said: “The increased diabetes risk in South Asians is likely due in part to the fact that, for a given body mass index, South Asians possess greater amounts of total and abdominal fat.

However, this alone does not explain the increased risk.

“Our study reveals that even if someone is physically active, if they also spend a lot of time sitting, then they continue to exhibit increased diabetes risk.”

Dr Gill added: “While further research is required, it would be wise for South Asians to have active lifestyles that reduce the amount of time they spend sitting down.

“While most people have no choice but to sit at work, taking the opportunity to stand up during breaks might help reduce the risk.”

The research, published in the May edition of the journal Diabetes Care, was funded by the National Prevention Research Initiative, led by the Medical Research Council.

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**Notes to Editors**The National Prevention Research Initiative is a funding consortium comprising the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, the Department of Health, Diabetes UK, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Medical Research Council, Research and Development Office for the Northern Ireland Health and Social Services, the Chief Scientist Office, the Scottish Executive Heath Department, the Welsh Assembly Government, and the World Cancer Research Fund. Additional financial support was provided by NHS Lothian, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde R&D, the Chief Scientist Office, NHS Health Scotland and the NHS National Services for Scotland.

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The research by Dr Jason Gill was featured in a report on BBC Asian Network on 10 May 2011 - click to listen [BBC Asian Network - Diabetes](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_197766_en.mp3)