**The once a day slimming jab that can cut the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 80%**

* **The weight loss drug could potentially help thousands of people avoid diabetes**
* **They would be used in the same way statins are used to ward off heart disease**
* **The landmark trial has been conducted by scientists at Imperial College London**
* **Daily dose of liraglutide slashes the chance of at-risk patients developing type 2**

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A woman holds out her jeans to illustrate weight loss

A weight loss drug could help thousands of people avoid diabetes in the same way statins are used to ward off heart disease, according to a landmark trial.

The daily medication liraglutide slashes the chance of at-risk patients developing type 2 diabetes by nearly 80 per cent, scientists at Imperial College London found.

It is injected into the skin once a day and already prescribed on the NHS to help people with type 2 diabetes manage their condition.

But the study of 2,300 people, published yesterday in the Lancet medical journal, showed the drug was also very effective at stopping the condition developing in the first place.

When given to obese people with ‘pre-diabetes’ – those who already have raised blood sugar but who have not yet developed the full condition – liraglutide had a remarkable impact.

The drug uses a ‘twin attack’ mechanism to tackle type 2 diabetes.

By producing appetite-suppressing hormones it makes people feel full quickly so they eat less.

Simultaneously it promotes the production of insulin from the pancreas.

Over three years half of the patients taking the drug lost 5 per cent of their body weight, a quarter lost 10 per cent and one in ten lost more than 15 per cent.

With the help of diet and exercise, some 60 per cent of patients saw their pre-diabetes reversed and their blood sugar return to healthy levels.

If the drug was made available on the NHS, around 2million people could benefit.

But it is very expensive at £2,387 a year so the researchers said more work was needed to identify which patients would benefit the most before it is considered for use on the NHS.

By comparison statins, which are taken by between 6million and 10million patients to ward off heart disease, cost just £20 a year.

Study leader Professor Carel le Roux said: ‘Liraglutide promotes weight loss by activating brain areas that control appetite.

‘These groundbreaking results could pave the way for a widely used, effective, and safe drug to reverse pre-diabetes and prevent diabetes in 80 per cent of at-risk people.

'This could improve the health of the population and save millions on healthcare spending.’

The landmark trial was conducted by scientists at Imperial College London (pictured)

But he stressed it is not ready for large-scale use quite yet.

Professor le Roux added: ‘When statins were first introduced they cost £50 a month – this is just the first in class of this drug, others will come along and the price will go down.’

He has already established that people who do not respond within 12 weeks are not likely to benefit, but is now developing genetic tests to screen those who will benefit most.

A spokesman for Novo Nordisk, the Danish company which makes liraglutide and funded the Imperial study, said the firm has not yet decided whether to apply for NICE approval of the drug for pre-diabetes.

**GUM DISEASE: A WARNING SIGN?**

Gum disease could be an early warning sign of type 2 diabetes, a study suggests.

Experts said dentists who discovered patients with severe gum problems should screen them for the condition.

A study of 313 middle-aged people by the University of Amsterdam found patients with severe gum disease were 23 per cent more likely to have type 2 diabetes, and 47 per cent more likely to have pre-diabetes than those with no gum disease.

Writing in the journal BMJ Open Diabetes Research And Care, they said this was because people with diabetes were more susceptible to infections and impaired wound healing.

The researchers said it would be feasible to screen for undiagnosed diabetes in dental practices, focusing on people with the most severe form of gum disease.

Picking up on diabetes and pre-diabetes early is essential in helping to avoid complications.

Some 3.5million people have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes – but more than 500,000 are living with the condition unknowingly.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4251158/Once-day-slimming-jab-cut-diabetes-risk-80.html#ixzz4eJSm0f00>   
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