

Diabetes Burden in the IDF-MENA Region

We are happy to publish this special issue on Diabetes Care in the IDF-MENA region. This issue is in addition to the four regular issues of the *Journal of Diabetology* published every year.

The IDF-MENA (International Diabetes Federation-Middle East and North Africa) region covers a total of 21 countries viz., Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. According to the IDF Atlas 2021, the MENA region has the highest regional prevalence (16.2%) with 73 million adults living with diabetes.^[1] It has been predicted that these numbers will increase to 136 million by 2045, an 87% increase that would be the second-highest increase globally. Further, this region has the highest percentage of deaths caused by diabetes (24.5%) in people of working age in 2021.^[1] All these facts indicate the significance of creating awareness about diabetes care in this region and this issue has been devoted to this purpose.

The highlight of this issue is the “IDF-MENA Region Guidelines for the Management of Type 2 Diabetes.”^[2] The guidelines include non-pharmacological management of diabetes by lifestyle modification, diabetes education, nutrition therapy, physical activity, weight management, adequate sleep, cessation of tobacco products, and pharmacological management of diabetes by monotherapy, combination therapy, insulin therapy, and its dosing. The importance of screening and management of chronic complications and diabetic foot care have also been emphasized.

The other highlight of this issue is the survey by the IDF-MENA region member associations on the accessibility and availability of insulin in 18 of the 21 countries in this region.^[3] For better diabetes care, an uninterrupted access and availability of diabetes drugs is of utmost importance. The limitations to insulin access in MENA region countries and the solutions to mitigate these problems so that insulin is sufficiently available at an affordable cost have been detailed in this issue.^[3-5]

The country with the highest prevalence of diabetes in the MENA region (26.7%) as reported by IDF in 2021 is Pakistan.^[1] There are 33 million individuals living with diabetes in Pakistan and the natural disasters such as flooding and earthquake have taken a toll on the diabetes care in this country as explained by Odhaib *et al.*^[6] Apart from the prevalence being high in this region, the number of people with undiagnosed diabetes is also high (27.3 million). There are 47.1% and 30.8% of undiagnosed diabetes in Iraq and Syria, respectively.^[1] In this respect,

the second article of the issue which has described the devastating effects of the political instability in post-2003 Iraq and post-2011 Syria on diabetes care and management is of significance.^[7] Some of the MENA region countries are deprived of diabetes management technologies such as insulin pumps, continuous glucose monitoring systems, and diabetes self-management applications. This has been outlined in the article by Ghafoor *et al.*^[8]

There has been an exponential increase in the prevalence of diabetes globally and the IDF-MENA region is no exclusion from this. Through this special issue on diabetes care in the IDF-MENA region, we hope to bring awareness regarding better management of diabetes to the people with diabetes, physicians, and other health-care professionals. The limitations in the availability, accessibility, and affordability of insulin and other diabetes care technologies highlighted in this issue would be an eye-opener to the governmental and non-governmental organizations to frame policies for providing better diabetes care at an affordable cost.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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