Health behaviours in people with intellectual disability and co-occurring type 2 diabetes

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Background:
Due to the increasing life expectancy for people with an intellectual disability (1), and a higher risk for developing chronic diseases than the general population (2), there has been a marked increase in recent years in the absolute number of people with intellectual disability and co-occurring type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. However, little is currently known about the health behaviours of this population.

Aims/Objectives:
The aims of this paper are to describe the health behaviours of people with co-occurring intellectual disability and type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, and the frequency of their adherence to recommended guidelines.

Methods:
Cross-sectional data was collected from a postal survey conducted among a sample of 3360 individuals in Queensland, Australia. Four main health behaviours were assessed: nutrition, physical activity, smoking and alcohol intake. Body Mass Index was also recorded.

Findings and Conclusions:
People with co-occurring type 2 Diabetes Mellitus and intellectual disability were found to have low levels of adherence to nutrition and physical activity guidelines, and high levels of obesity. The majority met the recommended levels of smoking and alcohol use. Compared to the general population of people with type 2 diabetes, people with intellectual disability were significantly more likely to be sedentary (OR;95%CI=4.0; 2.1 - 7.8) and to be obese (1.8;1.0 - 3.4). Interventions may need to be developed which specifically target this population to ensure that they are getting the support they need to maintain their health.

References: