

Girls with big breasts are more prone to diabetes

Girls with big breasts have a 68 percent higher chance of developing diabetes by middle age than their small-breasted counterparts, according to a new study by Canadian scientists.

The decade-long study to find the link between big breasts and diabetes development among nurses in the US shows that those with bigger breasts at the age of 20 are at a higher risk of developing the disease in later years.

Joel Ray, professor of medicine at the University of Toronto and a clinician-scientist at the local St. Michael's Hospital, said this was 'the broad conclusion' of his research team on the basis on this study.

'Our findings are based on data from the Nurses Health Study II project in 14 American states. In a nutshell, 92,102 nurses were studied for link between their breast size and their chances of developing diabetes by the age of 35. The bigger their breasts are at the age of 20, the bigger their chances of developing diabetes,' Ray told IANS.

However, Ray was quick to add that the breast size could be one of the factors, apart from smoking, family history, diet and ethnicity that trigger diabetes in women.

'Obesity remains a big factor. Obese women tend to have larger breasts, thereby becoming more prone to diabetes,' he said.

From these findings, he said, it will be interesting to study how breast fat influences insulin resistance.

Ray emphasized that their research was preliminary at this stage and should not be taken at its face value.

Women should not think about breast surgeries to minimize their chances of developing diabetes.

'It is an interesting possibility that needs to be studied before we can say anything,' he said.

During the study, he said, it was found that nurses with a family history of diabetes or those who smoked were more prone to developing the disease.

'Out of 92,102 nurses in the decade-long study, 1,844 developed diabetes.'

The study, published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, also showed that big-breasted nurses reported being heavier than others at young ages of five and 10, and entering puberty earlier. Ray said there is a definite link between early puberty among fat girls, insulin resistance and their predisposition to diabetes.

Breast tissue is extremely sensitive to hormones. Since insulin is a hormone, there is resistance to it by breast tissue, he said. A bigger breast means more insulin resistance and more chances of diabetes.

Ray said he was not sure how important these findings were for Indian and South Asian women.

'Since this study was conducted on mostly white women, I won't say how significant it is for Indian and South Asia women. Diabetes in India is becoming rampant because of genetic and other reasons,' he said.

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