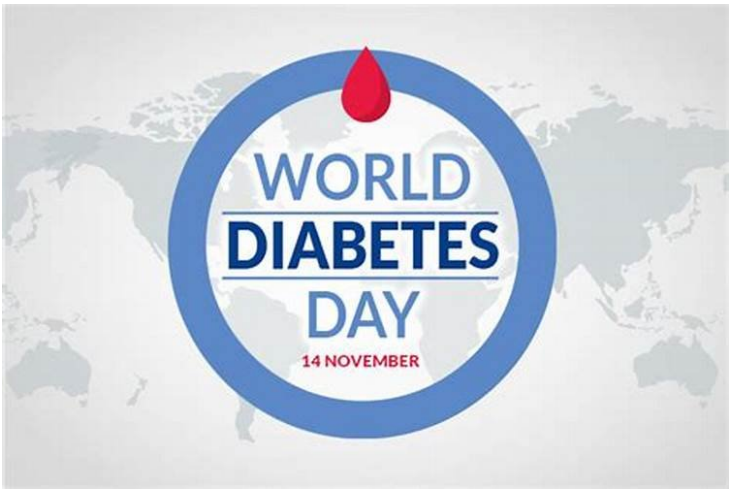
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Diabetes Singapore and GSK join forces to focus on risk of viral infections for diabetics

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To improve lives affected by diabetes through educational talks and activities on World Diabetes Day, on November 14



Diabetes Singapore has partnered with British pharma firm GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) to increase awareness on the increased risk of contracting viral infections among people with diabetes, such as respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and shingles, due to a weakened immune system.

Themed "Diabetes and Well-being", World Diabetes Day in Singapore took place from 9 – 10 November at HDB Hub Toa Payoh. The campaign emphasised the importance of access to diabetes care and support to prevent diabetes-related complications and improve the quality of life for individuals living with diabetes.

According to the Ministry of Health (MoH), about 1 in 3 Singaporeans may develop diabetes in their lifetime.The National Population Health Survey in 2023 revealed that 7.3% of Singapore residents aged 18 to 74 years suffer from diabetes. The prevalence of diabetes was observed to increase with age, from 1% in young adults aged 30 to 39 years and 22% among those aged 70 to 74 years.

As people with diabetes are more prone to contracting viral infections such as shingles and RSV due to weakened immunity, greater awareness needs to be raised on shingles and RSV-related complications, symptoms for early detection and diagnosis for timely medical intervention and treatment of infections. Underlying health conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular diseases such as heart disease and stroke, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are known to increase the risk and complications of shingles.

Those with diabetes have a 38% greater likelihood of contracting shingles as compared to people without. The recovery process for these patients may be more complicated, as they are susceptible to secondary infections, including bacterial infections in the skin or areas affected by a shingles rash. Meanwhile, people with diabetes aged 50 or older are at 2.4 to 6.4 times greater risk of being hospitalised due to severe RSV disease than those without diabetes.