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Can Diabetes Affect Mood or Cause Anger and Even ADHD?

By Jillita Horton, Yahoo Contributor Network

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Is diabetes connected to anger, bad moods and ADHD? On one hand, it seems there's no connection between being easily aroused to anger, ADHD or being very moody, and having diabetes. But suppose an adult or child in your life has anger issues, or frequently has mood disturbances or signs of ADHD. This person can very well have diabetes, and the diabetes can very well be causing or significantly contributing to anger outbursts, moodiness and/or ADHD symptoms.

I asked whether or not diabetes can be connected to anger and mood to Dr. Georgianna Donadio, a nutritionist, health educator and Program Director of the National Institute of Whole Health in the Boston area. "The answer is a resounding yes," she replies. In the brain is a neurotransmitter called dopamine, and excess amounts of dopamine are associated with mood and behavioral changes.

Dr. Donadio explains, "Recently, Vanderbilt University Medical Center identified that insulin levels affect the brain's dopamine system, which is involved in many neuropsychiatric conditions, including drug addiction, Parkinson's disease, ALS, and so forth."

There are two types of diabetes: type I and type II. Type I is also known as insulin-dependent diabetes. The patient's pancreas does not produce any insulin. Ten percent of diabetics have type I. In type II, the patient's pancreas produces insulin, but the body does not know what to do with it.

Though about 80 percent of type II diabetics are overweight, and this type of diabetes is strongly correlated with being overweight, lack of exercise and poor eating habits, a thin person can still develop type II if other lifestyle risk factors are present. Genetics also play a role, but not in terms of destiny, but rather, in terms of predisposition.

If a person has anger problems or ADHD symptoms before developing diabetes, then if the diabetes isn't managed properly, the condition can have a definite impact on that person's temper and mood.

Dr. Donadio continues, "In addition, theirs (Vanderbilt University Medical Center) and other studies have provoked questions regarding how controlling insulin levels (such as in diabetes) can have an impact on and for ADD, ADHD, and this suggests that the effects of kids/adults having high carbohydrate/sugar diets may be a critical factor in the development of ADD, ADHD and other neurological/brain conditions."

She adds: "The brain needs glucose to function properly and without proper insulin regulation, sugar levels can become erratic and seriously impact cognitive and neurological functioning. People with hypoglycemia often have severe glucose swings and personality issues as a result."

Hypoglycemia is low blood sugar. If you, or an adult or child in your life seems to have anger management issues, throws temper tantrums, has temper outbursts, rouses easily to a hostile mood, or shows ADHD signs, consider the possibility that diabetes is at play -- either undiagnosed, or, if diagnosed, not being managed properly.

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