Non-perception of diabetes risk among those at high risk
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Introduction
Misconceptions about being at risk of diabetes can be serious. Detecting diabetes early allows effective treatment and a reduction in potential complications. Age and obesity are key risk factors for the development of this chronic condition. This analysis examines the perceived risk of diabetes across different age and body mass index (BMI) groups.

Method
The Health Omnibus Survey (HOS) is an annual face-to-face survey of a representative South Australian population aged 15 years and over. HOS involves:
- A multistage, systematic, clustered area sample of people living in metropolitan Adelaide and country centres with a population of over 1000 persons;
- Interviewing the person in the household who was last to have a birthday;
- Up to six call backs in an attempt to interview the selected person;
- No replacement for non-respondents; and
- Weighting data by age, gender, geographic location, and probability of selection in the household, to accurately reflect the South Australian adult population.

In Spring 2005 (n=3047, response rate 63.1%), respondents without self-reported doctor-diagnosed diabetes (n=2836, 93.1%) were asked if they considered themselves at high risk of getting diabetes at some stage in their life.

Results
Overall, 20.6% (95% CI 19.1-22.1) of respondents without diabetes considered themselves to be at high risk of developing diabetes at some stage in their life.

Analysis by age groups indicated that increasing age was associated with a decrease in the proportion who considered themselves at high risk of developing diabetes (Table 1).

Table 1: Proportion of people without diabetes who consider themselves at high risk of developing diabetes at some stage in life, by age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-34</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>(18.5-23.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>(23.1-28.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>(13.7-21.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>(8.3-13.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>(19.1-22.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceived risk of developing diabetes was analysed by BMI using the World Health Organization definitions for obese (BMI ≥ 30) and not obese (BMI < 30).

Respondents who were obese were significantly more likely (42.4%) than those who were not obese (15.2%) to consider themselves at high risk of developing diabetes (Figure 2).

Conclusion
A significant proportion of people with two key risk factors for diabetes do not consider themselves at high risk of developing this serious condition.

These results highlight that raising awareness and understanding of the risk factors for developing diabetes among those at risk remains crucial.