3.86 crore Indians have undiagnosed diabetes: IDF Diabetes Atlas

Topics: Health · UPSC Prelims · TNPSC · SSC · Current Affairs



News

According to the International Diabetes Federation's (IDF) Diabetes Atlas (11th edition, 2025), India has about 8.98 crore adults aged 20–79 with diabetes, and about 43% (3.86 crore) of them are undiagnosed. IDF highlighted this ahead of World Diabetes Day (14 Nov). An IDF-commissioned online survey covered 2,411 adults aged 25–64 with type 2 risk factors but no diagnosis in six countries – Brazil, India, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Spain and the USA (June–July 2026) (reported 11–12 Nov 2026). Among Indian respondents, 35% named fear of the result as a barrier to a risk check.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
People with diabetes (India)	About 8.98 crore
Unaware	43%, about 3.86 crore
Indians who believed they were likely to develop type 2	Only 14% of respondents (though all had risk factors)
Indians not confident about arranging a diabetes risk check	48%

Point	Details
WHO target (World Health Assembly 2022)	80% of people with diabetes diagnosed by 2030

Background

- World Diabetes Day, 14 November, marks the birthday of Frederick Banting, who discovered insulin with Charles Best in 1921 (Nobel Prize 1923). IDF and WHO started the day in 1991; it has been an official UN Day since 2006 (UN General Assembly resolution 61/225).
- Insulin is made by the beta cells of the islets of Langerhans in the pancreas; alpha cells make glucagon. Type 1 diabetes = little or no insulin; type 2 = the body does not respond well to insulin.
- IDF was founded in 1950 and is based in Brussels. An earlier national survey (LASI, Lancet Global Health) found about 40% of diabetics aged 45+ were unaware. Worldwide, 589 million adults have diabetes, 252 million of them undiagnosed, and diabetes causes 3.4 million deaths a year (IDF).
- Note: 8.98 crore and 3.86 crore are IDF Diabetes Atlas estimates; 14%, 48% and 35% are results of the six-country online survey. The Atlas projects about 15.67 crore people with diabetes in India by 2050.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam (launched August 2021 at Samanapalli, Krishnagiri district) brings tests and medicines for diabetes and hypertension to people's homes. The large ICMR-INDIAB diabetes survey was led by the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Chennai.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

According to the International Diabetes Federation's (IDF) Diabetes Atlas (11th edition, 2025), India has about 8.98 crore adults aged 20–79 with diabetes, and about 43% (3.86 crore) of them are undiagnosed.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

People with diabetes (India): About 8.98 crore; Unaware: 43%, about 3.86 crore; Indians who believed they were likely to develop type 2: Only 14% of respondents (though all had risk factors); Indians not confident about arranging a diabetes risk check: 48%.

What is the background to this news?

World Diabetes Day, 14 November, marks the birthday of Frederick Banting, who discovered insulin with Charles Best in 1921 (Nobel Prize 1923).

Practice questions (with answers)

1. According to the IDF Diabetes Atlas (2025), how many people in India do not know they have diabetes?

A) 2.4 crore

B) 5.04 crore

C) 3.86 crore

D) 8.98 crore

Answer: C – Explanation: Of 8.98 crore people with diabetes, 43% (3.86 crore) are unaware of it. The WHO target is 80% diagnosed by 2030.

2. World Diabetes Day (14 November) marks the birthday of which co-discoverer of insulin?

A) Alexander Fleming

B) Frederick Banting

C) Louis Pasteur

D) Edward Jenner

Answer: B – Explanation: Banting and Charles Best discovered insulin in 1921; Banting shared the 1923 Nobel Prize. IDF and WHO started World Diabetes Day in 1991.

3. Insulin is secreted by which cells of the pancreas?

A) Beta cells of the islets of Langerhans

B) Alpha cells

C) Delta cells

D) Acinar cells

Answer: A – Explanation: Beta cells – insulin (lowers sugar); alpha – glucagon (raises sugar); delta – somatostatin. Acinar cells secrete digestive enzymes.

4. Where is the headquarters of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF)?

A) Geneva

B) Paris

C) Copenhagen

D) Brussels

Answer: D – Explanation: IDF was founded in 1950 and is based in Brussels, Belgium. WHO is headquartered in Geneva.

5. In which year was Tamil Nadu's "Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam" (doorstep care for diabetes and hypertension) launched?

A) 2019

B) 2023

C) 2021

D) 2025

Answer: C – Explanation: It was launched in August 2021 at Samanapalli, Krishnagiri district, bringing NCD medicines and tests to people's homes.

Sources: IDF press release, Brussels, 10 Nov 2026 (worlddiabetesday.org); IDF Diabetes Atlas 2025 – India (diabetesatlas.org). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.