

LeahMarie Bukurou

Mentors: Christopher Kitalong, PhD, Pacific Academic Institute for Research and
Larry Wakakoro, MA, Upward Bound Program

Coordinating Center: University of Hawai'i

Causes of Diabetes Type II Mellitus in the Republic of Palau: Genetics and Food Habits

Diabetes is a common life-long health condition. It is a serious and costly metabolic disease which is now one of a growing concern in the whole world including the Republic of Palau. There are two main types of diabetes: Type I diabetes and type II diabetes mellitus (T2DM). In this study we are looking at T2DM or lifestyle diabetes, which has been a major cause of injury and low life expectancy in Palau and the world. The causes have been mainly attributed to lifestyle but there are theories that point toward genetic predispositions of certain subsets of populations. In this study, we look at the lifestyle-based components of the Palauan population through a "Food Habits Survey".

The survey monitors food habits of people from various age groups throughout the country of Palau in order to assess where the food consumed is coming from and what types of food are being consumed. Surveys from 2015 showed that 72% of food consumed by 12 different families were imported and not local and the current survey shows that the number of imported food has increased. In addition, that habits of food collection have changed to show that collecting of food from local sources has been reduced drastically. This is directly correlated with the increase of BMI and blood sugar in Palauans. In order to completely understand food habits further studies would need to be done on food production in Palau in order to compare with import and food demand.

Key Words: Palau, Diabetes Type II Mellitus, Food Habits