

ROME



ELEVATING DIABETES TO THE TOP OF THE URBAN AGENDA

Nicknamed the ‘eternal city’, Rome is situated right on the banks of the River Tiber and was the birthplace and the centre of the Roman Empire. Since 1945, the city has experienced significant demographic development, with a population that has more than doubled,⁸¹ and the city is now the largest in Italy. With more than 4.3 million inhabitants in the metropolitan city, it is the fourth most populated city in the European Union.⁸²

Amidst the ancient ruins and monuments there is lively traffic, with more than 68.0% of the population commuting daily.⁸¹ Most people use motor vehicles to get around, contributing to both congestion and pollution problems. Only 15.0% of the population chooses to walk or cycle to their destination.⁸¹ Use of inactive transport along with other factors, such as poor diet, lack of physical exercise and increasing rates of obesity, underlie the rising challenge of urban diabetes in Rome. However, one of the largest contributors to the rise of diabetes is the increasing age of the population in Rome, where the number of citizens over the age

of 65 has grown by 136,000 over the last 13 years, reaching a total of 631,000 in 2015.⁸¹

The number of people diagnosed with diabetes in Rome has increased by 60.0% over the past 15 years alone, and this figure is expected to increase further.⁸¹ Today, 8.3% of the adult population (aged 20–79) has diabetes, and by 2045 the prevalence could reach 10.4% if no action is taken (Figure 10).⁸³

Cities Changing Diabetes, in partnership with local researchers, health institutions, scientific societies, patient associations and universities in Rome and other parts of Italy, has leveraged available data to generate a Rule of Halves for the metropolitan city of Rome.⁸¹ This, in turn, has informed the baseline for the Diabetes Projection Model for Rome. There are more than 260,000 adults with diabetes in Rome.⁸³ One in four remains undiagnosed.⁸¹ Furthermore, of those who are diagnosed and receiving treatment, only half are achieving treatment targets.⁸¹ All in all, nine out of 10 people with diabetes in Rome do not achieve desired health



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outcomes and are thus at increased risk of developing diabetes-related complications in the near future.⁸⁴

MOVING BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Over the coming months, the findings from the Rule of Halves research will be further enriched with qualitative research, as programme partners investigate local vulnerabilities associated with diabetes using the Urban Diabetes Risk Assessment. The findings will help give a more thorough understanding of how the sociocultural factors of diabetes come into play, and help to identify barriers and opportunities for successful diabetes prevention, care and management in Rome.

MOBILISING FOR ACTION

Even though Cities Changing Diabetes in Rome is still in the early stages, the programme partners are not standing still and waiting to complete research; they are leveraging the existing data and stakeholder

enthusiasm and have already undertaken a range of activities and initiatives.

Elevating diabetes on the urban agenda

The Rule of Halves findings have informed a report about diabetes in Rome – the Rome Cities Changing Diabetes Atlas 2017. The report draws attention to the fact that the prevalence of diabetes varies between neighbourhoods and is impacted by socioeconomic factors. It was presented at Rome Metropolitan City Hall meeting and again at the first Rome Cities Changing Diabetes summit in July 2017.⁸¹

Integrating health into urban planning

Spurred on by the urgency of the urban diabetes challenge, Cities Changing Diabetes has also launched several actions in Rome. These include mapping out 38 walking routes, covering about 261 km, for people with diabetes, and working on the development of a master’s degree in global and urban health. The degree stems from a widespread need expressed by various organisations to develop highly qualified minds to govern organisational and strategic processes in the public health sector.

Encouraging broader national action

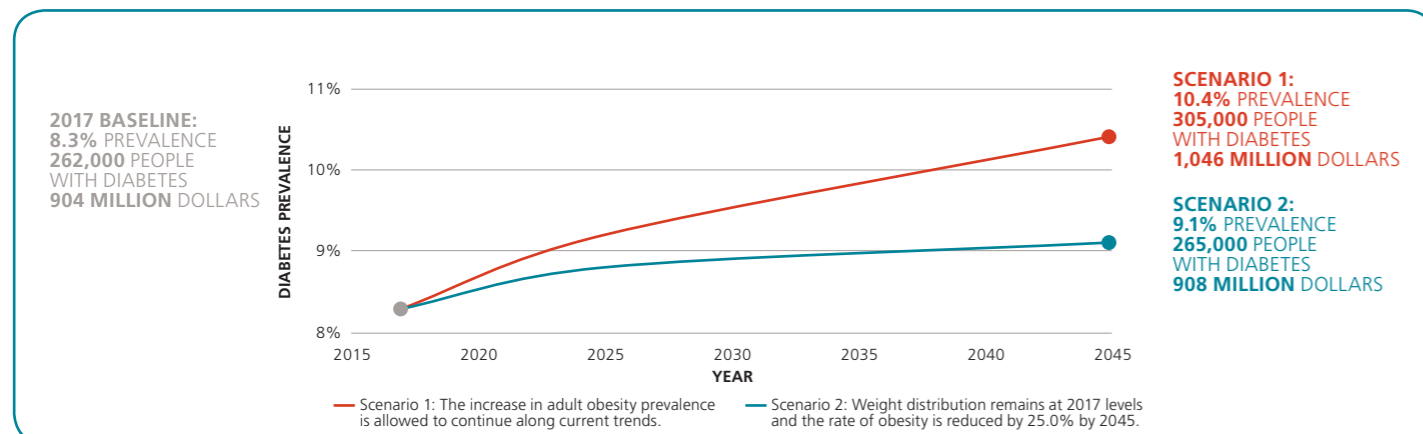
Another result of Cities Changing Diabetes in Rome is the ‘Health in the city: the common good’ manifesto. The manifesto seeks to engage all major stakeholders in the city, and to address the issues related to health while promoting the urban diabetes agenda in other Italian cities. The manifesto outlines key points that can guide cities to study and improve the determinants of health in their urban environments, and leverage them to come up with strategies to encourage people to adopt more active lifestyles so that they become less vulnerable to diabetes and obesity.

“Urbanisation and its links with the surrounding territory provide, on the one hand, many risks for public and individual health, and, on the other hand, opportunities that have to be consciously and wisely exploited by an administration. The Cities Changing Diabetes initiative provides an excellent frame to perform an analysis of social determinants and economic and environmental risk factors that impact on health.”

ROBERTO PELLA, VICE PRESIDENT VICAR OF ITALIAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION (ANCI), PRESIDENT CONFEDERATION OF TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, MAYOR OF VALDENGO

FIGURE 10: PROJECTED DIABETES PREVALENCE IN ROME, 2017–2045 (ADULTS AGED 20–79)⁸³

If we reduce obesity by 25.0% by 2045, more than 40,000 cases of type 2 diabetes can be avoided, and 138 million dollars in healthcare expenditure saved



NOTE: The baseline prevalence of 8.3% among adults (aged 20–79) in 2017 uses Rule of Halves research conducted in Rome in 2017 and applies to the Rome Metropolitan Area.^{81,84}

LOCAL PROGRAMME PARTNERS

- City of Rome
- Health City Institute
- National Institute for Health Federsanità ANCI
- Italian Barometer Diabetes Observatory Foundation
- University of Roma Sapienza
- University of Roma Tor Vergata
- National Olympic Committee
- Danish Embassy in Rome, Italy
- Centre for Social Studies and Policies (CENSIS Foundation)
- National Institute of Statistics
- Institute for Competitiveness
- Centre for Outcomes and Research and Clinical Epidemiology
- Italian Diabetes Society
- Italian Diabetologists Association
- Italian Society of General Practitioners
- Active Citizenship Network (Cittadinanzattiva)

ONE IN FOUR CHILDREN LIVING IN ROME ARE OVERWEIGHT OR HAVE OBESITY.⁸¹