- Diabetes

WHEN SWEETNESS LEADS TO A BROKEN HEART

Understanding diabetes and cardiovascular health risks

Diabetes Mellitus is characterized by high blood glucose level. But it does not end there. Its complications are more far-reaching than most people would like to admit. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), at least 68 percent of people aged 65 and older with diabetes die from some form of heart disease while 16 percent die of stroke. In addition, adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to die from heart disease compared to adults without diabetes.

HEALTHY EVER AFTER

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What does sugar in the blood have to do with the heart? Elevated blood glucose or sugar in the bloodstream will damage blood vessels and nerves. This will lead to stiffness and hardening of the arteries. Fat and cholesterol deposits will accumulate and blood pressure will increase leading to a condition known as atherosclerosis. Think clogged arteries and obstructed blood flow to the body's vital organs, most especially the heart and the brain.

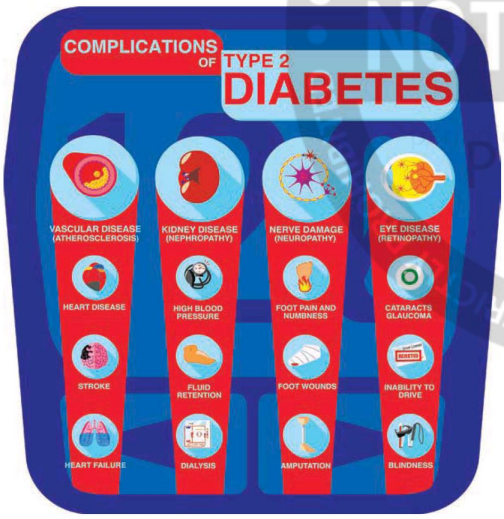
In 2017, there were over 3,721,900 Filipinos with diabetes in the Philippines, according to the International Diabetes Federation (IDF). A major study called Dapagliflozin Effect on Cardiovascular Events–Thrombolysis in Myocardial Infarction 58 (DECLARE-TIMI 58) was conducted by **Stephen D. Wiviott**, M.D et al involving over 17,000 patients from across 33 countries including the Philippines where 337 Filipino patients were enrolled. It is the largest SGLT2 inhibitor cardiovascular outcomes trial conducted to date. The study shows the diabetes drug dapagliflozin reduces hospitalization for heart failure and helps protect the heart and kidneys.

"In achieving statistically significant reduction in the composite endpoint of hospitalization for heart failure or cardiovascular death, the DECLARE study results mark an important milestone for Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus patients and its management," remarked Dr. **Rosa Allyn Sy**, lead Philippine DECLARE investigator for Endocrinology and Section Head for Endocrinology, Diabetes, Metabolism and Nutrition at Cardinal Santos Medical Center and Ospital ng Makati.

AstraZeneca presented the positive full results from the DECLARE-TIMI 58 cardiovascular outcomes trial (CVOT) for dapagliflozin on Nov. 10, 2018 at the American Heart Association (AHA) Scientific Sessions 2018 in Chicago and simultaneously published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Results of the clinical trial showed that the drug dapagliflozin:

- Significantly reduced the risk of hospitalization for heart failure or cardiovascular death by 17 percent
- Led to fewer major adverse cardiovascular events
- Is confirmed and well-established to be safe.



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Dr. **Araceli Panelo**, chairman of the board of trustees of the Institute for Studies on Diabetes Foundation, says: "This is a groundbreaking development for Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus patients as DECLARE gives us hope that we may be able to prevent or delay the onset of heart failure in a broad patient population."

In addition, Dr. **Maria Teresa Abola**, lead Philippine DECLARE investigator for Cardiology, associate clinical professor at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, and acting manager of the Department of Clinical Research at the Philippine Heart Center, notes that "In including patients with multiple cardiovascular risk factors (60 percent) and with established cardiovascular disease (40 percent), the DECLARE study has now provided evidence across a broad range of patients with Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular risk. The results from this trial are important since heart failure is an early and frequent complication of diabetes with significant implications for patients and their families."

Dapagliflozin works by causing the kidneys to get rid of glucose in the urine. It is a prescription medicine and patients are advised to consult their physician for proper management of their condition and prevention of complications.

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