Compared to other parts of the developing world, South and Central America are traditionally not considered to be major hot spots for diabetes and other chronic diseases. However, with the economic transition, globalisation and the accompanying changes in living standards, the prevalence of diabetes and obesity is steadily rising in this region and the social and economic impact of diabetes is becoming evident. Diabetes prevalence for South and Central America was 8.2% in 2013, with 24.1 million people living with diabetes. The estimated increase in prevalence of almost 60% between 2013 and 2035 will see this figure rise to approximately 38.5 million people.

Diabetes prevalence for North America and the Caribbean was 9.6% in 2013 with close to 37 million people living with diabetes. This is projected to increase to 50.4 million people by 2035 in the region which constitutes an increase of more than 37%. During the last few years, the World Diabetes Foundation has extended its support and collaboration in this region to include funding of national level programmes in Honduras and Mexico and projects which address primary prevention and capacity building in the Caribbean.

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