

TOLL OF DIABETES IS RISING RAPIDLY

**Death Rate for First Quarter of
1929 Was 23.8 a 100,000,
Metropolitan Life Finds.**

INCREASE LAID TO RICH DIET.

**Only the Use of Insulin Has Kept
Mortality From Being Much
Higher, Experts Assert.**

Overindulgence in food and drink has raised the death rate from diabetes to a new high level for the first quarter of this year and is likely to drive it by the end of 1929 to the highest figure ever recorded, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company reports in its current Statistical Bulletin, made available yesterday.

Only the use of insulin has prevented the death rate from being "much higher," according to the medical opinion of the company, but its use is not preventive. It cannot control the increase of diabetes, which is considered to be largely the result of the richness of modern diet.

The insurance company, basing its report on the figures for its 19,000,000 industrial policy holders, announced that the death rate from diabetes for the first three months of the year had been 23.8 for each 100,000. Much of the increase, it said, was due to the prevalence of influenza and pneumonia, which hastened the deaths of many diabetics, but even in March and April, with the influenza epidemic rapidly waning, the diabetes mortality exceeded the high figures recorded for these months in 1928.

"It is our best judgment," the company declared, "that diabetes is on the increase, in spite of the use of insulin, because of the dietary excesses practiced by the American people."

The report emphasizes that the Metropolitan does not wish to reflect upon insulin treatment and declared that it was misunderstood in an earlier statement on the subject.

"That statement, in effect, was that despite the general and increasing use of insulin, the diabetes death rate had increased," it explains. "In some quarters the inference was drawn and published that the Metropolitan considered the insulin treatment useless. Despite the fact that the diabetes death rate did increase in 1927, showed a further rise in 1928, and bids fair to reach, in 1929, the highest figure ever recorded, it is our definite judgment that but for the increasing use of insulin the death rate would be much higher.

"It has been demonstrated that insulin has been a great benefit in prolonging the life of young diabetics. Older patients, formerly kept on starvation diets, and living closely restricted lives, are able to resume their former activities. Coma is preventable and curable by insulin; and the treatment under expert care helps diabetics through infectious diseases and surgical operations.

"But the course of the diabetes death rate among insured males leaves no room for doubt that between 45 and 65 years there has been no important change, and that after age 65 there has been a distinct and significant rise. For females, the only ages showing a decline have been those of childhood and early adult life. From 35 to 45 years there has been a slight rising tendency; and the death rate among female diabetics after 55 has risen sharply."

This is one of the few diseases which, among older people, may be prevented by popular education, the report declared.