

Diabetes screening should start young

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THIS FOR CHILDREN AGED 10 AND ABOVE

DUBAI

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A high powered committee has recommended screening of children 10 years and above under an aggressive initiative to combat diabetes in the UAE where 19.6 per cent of the population is diabetic.

The committee empowered by the Ministry of Health met yesterday to strategise their battle against the disease to reduce the incidence to 16 per cent according to the National Health Agenda goals for 2021. It has established four task forces for screening diabetics, preventing its spread, implementing the education and awareness and setting up a pan-UAE diabetes

registry by the end of the year.

The screening among ten-year-olds and upwards is based on the assessment of the International Diabetes Federation which said children are getting susceptible to Type II diabetes because of obesity and sedentary lifestyles.

Dr Fatheya Al Awadi, Vice-President of the Emirates Diabetes Society and head of endocrinology at Dubai Hospital, outlined the protocols the committee planned to adopt to tackle the scourge. "The task forces will present the results of their findings, discuss the methodology and challenges and consolidate their findings regularly and monitor the progress of the goals. We will set short-term, intermittent and long-term goals for each task force and come together to

make sure the recommendations are implemented. We will also report on the development to the Prime Minister's Office on a regular basis."

Road map

The road map for combating diabetes is based on the Nationwide Diabetes and Lifestyle Survey launched in 2012 by Dr Nabeel Sulaiman, an expert in public health from Sharjah University. Dr Sulaiman's team, which covered Sharjah and Ajman and is currently completing the survey in Umm Al Quwain and Ras Al Khaimah, will consolidate the findings with the survey results in Dubai.

Dr Sulaiman spoke about the importance of the right kind of screening and discussed the challenges faced in completing the survey.