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Urological Complications of Obesity and Diabetes

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Diabetes mellitus is a spectrum of debilitating, costly diseases that can lead to multiple and serious complications as well as premature death. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that in 2007, 23.6 million people or 7.8% of the population had diabetes.¹ The report also indicated that 25.9% of U.S. adults 20 years old or older had impaired fasting glucose or pre-diabetes (35.4% of adults 60 years old or older). When this percentage was applied to the entire U.S. population in 2007, an estimated 57 million American adults 20 years old or older had pre-diabetes, representing a cohort likely to proceed to diabetes. At the same time, data from the most recent National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey revealed that among men and women the prevalence of obesity (body mass index 30 or greater) was 34% and is increasing in prevalence.² That the burden of diabetes and obesity is substantial and increasing their impact on the health of the U.S. population will become more apparent in the coming years. However, an area that has received relatively little attention is the effect of diabetes and obesity on urological complications.

Diabetes and obesity impact the function and structure of the lower urinary tract including the bladder and prostate. They can lead to complications such as urinary incontinence, poor bladder emptying, sexual dysfunction, lower urinary tract symptoms and urinary tract infection. However, the prevalence of urological complications of obesity and diabetes has not been included in the Centers for Disease Control reports. Urological complications are found in up to 80% of individuals diagnosed with diabetes mellitus, a higher rate than that of widely recognized complications such as neuropathy and nephropathy.³

In March 2009, with sponsorship from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, a group of international investigators gathered to discuss and identify research priorities related to urological complications of obesity and diabetes. The articles published in this supplement to *The Journal of Urology*® describe major areas of current interest. To stimulate and accelerate research into urological complications, we asked the authors to provide a translational view of this clinically important area. Our primary aims were for leaders in the field to summarize current knowledge and identify new areas of research to improve our understanding of urological complications among men and women with obesity and/or diabetes. Emphasis was placed on proposing next steps to enhance our

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ability to prevent or effectively treat urological complications associated with diabetes and obesity. The articles in this issue are a synthesis of the presentations and new research directions, and we hope they provide the basis for future increased scientific research on urological complications among men and women with obesity and/or diabetes.

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