

## NATIONAL

# Hundreds March To Raise Awareness of Diabetes

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More than 400 people marched in Phnom Penh Sunday to mark World Diabetes Day and to bring attention to the overlooked but potentially deadly illness for Cambodians, health organizations said.

A survey conducted by the Cambodian Diabetes Association and the World Health Organization revealed that diabetes strikes 5 percent of the people over 25 years old nationwide, and 10 percent in urban areas.

Sok Kanha, deputy director of planning and health at the Min-

istry of Health, said Monday that the growing problem of diabetes could affect the nation's development by draining its human resources.

The ministry is trying to cooperate with health NGOs on the issue, she said, but this is proving difficult as many organizations are more focused on HIV-AIDS.

Maurits Van Pelt, of the NGO Mopotsyo that works with diabetes sufferers, said that Cambodia is now home to more than 200,000 type-2 diabetes cases, and health NGOs can only care for 10,000 of them.

"Levels are surprisingly high,

given that the population is slim," said Van Pelt, adding that the disease especially affects obese people.

"If this population is going to get fat [as people's standards of living improve], it's going to be quite a public disaster," he said.

One of the marchers on Sunday was 75-year-old Ke Vann who was diagnosed with diabetes in 2000.

Ke Vann said that she has been living a normal life now that she has medicine and stays away from food with high sugar content. Exercise is also very important, she said.

"The doctor advised me to exercise at least 30 minutes every day," she added.