Background

- While in metropolitan France the prevalence of diabetes has been estimated at 3% in 1998 in the overall population (based on medical claims for treatment), the prevalence reaches:
  - 18% in people aged 65 years or more in La Réunion Island (Indian ocean) in 2000 (the Rodia study, based on screening data);
  - 7% of people aged more than 18 years in Guadeloupe (Caribbean Island) in 1984-1985 (Insam, based on screening data);
  - 5% of people aged more than 15 years in Martinique (Caribbean Island) in 2004 (the Escal Study, based on self-reported data).

Aims

This study aims at describing the mortality related to diabetes in the French overseas departments and at comparing rates with those of metropolitan France.

Methods

- French national mortality data for the years 2001 to 2003: all death certificates of French residents were extracted, including data about:
  - the underlying cause of death;
  - other causes contributing to the death (on average, 3 causes per death certificate);
  - socio-demographic data (age at death, sex, district of residence).

- Identification of deaths related to diabetes:
  - when diabetes was mentioned in a death certificate as the underlying cause of death;
  - when diabetes was mentioned among multiple causes of death (as the underlying cause or any other cause of death).

- We analysed all deaths related to diabetes in 4 different areas of residence: La Réunion Island, Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guyana and metropolitan France.

- Data for the years 2001 to 2003 were averaged to provide more precise estimates of death rates in each area due to low numbers in overseas departments:
  - the population living in each area, estimated by the French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (Insee), was used as the denominator;
  - death rates were standardized based on the European population age structure (IARC 1976).

- Premature mortality related to diabetes occurring before age 65 years was calculated.

- The average number of years of potential life lost before age 65 years, in relation with diabetes, was calculated per person.

Results

- Each year the percentage of deaths related to diabetes in the overall mortality was higher in overseas departments than in metropolitan France.

- In overseas departments as in metropolitan France, the percentage of deaths related to diabetes among multiple causes increased slightly from 2001 to 2003.

- In the overseas departments as in metropolitan France, each year, the number of deaths with diabetes was increased by a factor 2 to 3 when multiple causes rather than the underlying cause were considered.

- In 2001-2003, the average age at death, related to diabetes (among multiple causes of death), was younger in overseas departments than in metropolitan France (72 years in La Réunion Island, 75 years in Guadeloupe, 76 years in Martinique, and 70 years in French Guyana).

- While in metropolitan France the prevalence of diabetes has been estimated at 3% in 1998 in the overall population (based on medical claims for treatment), the prevalence reaches:
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