



## Media Release

### **Sugar is more addictive than Cocaine or Tobacco!**



**Colombo, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2014:** Diabetes is the forerunner of all non-communicable diseases, which can be avoided by controlling your sugar intake. AIA Insurance, which promotes healthy living as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility, strives to increase education and awareness on making healthy choices to live a healthy life, through seminars and workshops. In one such seminar, it was revealed that sugar is in fact 8 times more addictive than cocaine (Dr Mark Hyman – USA, Feb 2014) and tobacco.

Our daily sugar intake should be less than 6 teaspoons a day (World Health Organization). However, most Sri Lankans, on average consume over 9 teaspoons (Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka). The biggest problem with sugar addiction is that it is a vicious cycle; when you consume sugar in any form, you start enjoying the taste which in turn causes craving. This leads to a gradual increase in sugar consumption which can result in obesity and worse, diabetes.

Notably, this dependency on sugar starts at infancy, with mothers introducing refined sugar to their babies at weaning through food and drink, especially if they are underweight. Mothers should remember their babies are unaware of the taste of sugar until it is introduced to them in early life, which can lead to craving and addiction, with serious consequences of obesity and diabetes in later life. Yes, they need sugar for energy and fuelling of brain cells, but 'everything is moderation' is a mantra most relevant when it comes to sugar consumption.

Globally, 382 million persons battle diabetes, which is estimated to rise to 592 million by 2035. Further, 2.5 million patients go blind, 50% die of heart disease, 20% die of kidney failure and 1 million amputations take place annually due to Diabetes related complications. 5.1 million deaths are recorded annually due to Diabetes (Diabetes Atlas, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed), with 100 persons dying every day of Diabetes and heart disease, in Sri Lanka (World Health Organization).

These insights were revealed by Dr. Mahen Wijesuriya, Honorary Director of the National Diabetes Centre and Secretary of the Diabetes Association of Sri Lanka at a recent seminar conducted by AIA Insurance.