

## OPINION Stemming the silent diabetes epidemic

Long before the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, a silent epidemic of diabetes was causing blindness, lower limb amputation, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke and death among hundreds of millions of people. Worse, the prevalence of diabetes continues to increase globally.

Together with cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, cancers, and chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes is one of the world's four major noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), presenting a major threat to global health.

Today, an estimated 537 million adults around the world are living with diabetes, according to the 10th edition of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Diabetes Atlas. Four in five adults (80%) with diabetes live in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), including almost 4 million Filipino adults. This number is predicted to rise to 643 million by 2030 and 783 million by 2045. Nearly 1 in 2 people who have diabetes are undiagnosed. Diabetes was responsible for 6.7 million deaths in 2021 — 1 every 5 seconds. It cost at least \$966 billion in health expenditure — a 316% increase over the last 15 years.

Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin (hormone that regulates blood sugar) or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces, a condition known as insulin resistance.

Diabetes in its early stages is often asymptomatic. When symptoms do occur, these may include increased thirst and urination, increased hunger, fatigue, blurred vision, numbness or tingling in the feet or hands, sores that do not heal, and unexplained weight loss. Some people do not find out they have the disease until they have diabetes-related health problems, such as blurred vision or heart trouble. If you experience these symptoms, consult your doctor immediately.

There are two types of diabetes, type 1 and type 2. The most common form is type 2 diabetes. One is more likely to develop type 2 diabetes if you are not physically active and are overweight or obese. Extra weight sometimes causes insulin resistance and is common in people with type 2 diabetes. Other risk factors include being 45 or older, a family history of diabetes, high blood pressure, and a low level of HDL ("good") cholesterol or a high level of triglycerides.

The good news is there are steps to lower one's risk of developing diabetes. If one is overweight, it is best to shed the excess pounds and keep these off. A person may be able to prevent or delay diabetes by

losing 5%–7% of their starting weight. For instance, if a person weighs 200 pounds, the goal would be to lose about 10–14 pounds. A person may get at least 30 minutes of physical activity or talk to a doctor about the best exercise regimen. Eat a high-fiber, low-fat diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and fish. Eat smaller portions and drink water instead of sweetened beverages.

To improve access to diabetes care in LMICs, there is a need to provide increased and sustained financing for diabetes prevention and care; enact fit-for-purpose regulatory approval frameworks and policies to ensure the right products are readily available; establish or strengthen existing supply chain infrastructures; provide healthcare professionals with the right tools and training for the prevention, diagnosis and control of the disease; and finally, empower people with quality information so they can better manage their condition.

In April 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the Global Diabetes Compact to unite stakeholders across sectors, including people living with diabetes, to shape a common agenda and drive action toward improved solutions to diabetes treatment and care in LMICs.

The biopharmaceutical industry committed to collaborate with WHO, governments, civil society, health system stakeholders, and other private sectors to scale up existing initiatives and explore new collaborative models.

The biopharmaceutical industry is likewise involved in numerous partnerships on the ground, focusing its efforts on disease awareness and prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and control. They are also engaged in several collaborations for the prevention, timely testing and diagnosis, access to medicines, and management of patients on a course of treatment for diabetes.

But the work is not yet done. At present, there are more than 160 medicines in development to manage diabetes and related conditions to help save lives.

TEODORO B. PADILLA is the executive director of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), which represents the biopharmaceutical medicines and vaccines industry in the country. Its members are at the forefront of research and development efforts for COVID-19 and other diseases that affect Filipinos.



### MEDICINE CABINET TEODORO B. PADILLA

# Documentary highlights work of Filipina scientists

By Brontë H. Lacsamana  
Reporter

A DOCUMENTARY that highlights the work of Filipina data scientists over the pandemic shows how clear and accurate information can help solve public health crises.

"The challenge was to build a team that will encompass the data pipeline, from the data source to analysis to visualization," said Ma. Regina Justina E. Estuar, an information systems and computer science professor at Ateneo De Manila University and the team leader of FASSSTER (Feasibility Analysis of Syndromic Surveillance using Spatio-Temporal Epidemiological Modeler), a disease surveillance and modeling platform.

One of the subjects of *Pintig: Women, Data, and the Pandemic*, the FASSSTER team — initially formed to address dengue, measles, and typhoid — was mobilized by the Department of Health (DoH) during

the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

"With very little data and calibration, we were uncertain with what we had produced initially," said Ms. Estuar at the documentary's Oct. 28 launch. "One thing that was helpful was that there was good scientific discussion among groups of data scientists. The questions were hard but it challenged us to make sure we're doing the right thing."

Reinabelle C. Reyes, senior data scientist at Pintig Lab under the United Nations Development Program, added that data science and analytics should be applied to solve developmental problems.

"If your fundamentals are there and your heart is in the right place and you are open to collaborating with the right people, together you can come up with something bigger and better," she said.

Pintig Lab monitors and tracks the COVID-19 pandemic and provides data-driven support to DoH and other agencies in their response and recovery efforts.

AI4GOV, a social technology organization led by co-founder Lei Motilla, collaborated with data science groups to create an algorithm for triaging.

"We scoured the internet for algorithms. We created one and then presented it to DoH and then soon after there was a memorandum. It all happened so fast," Ms. Motilla said. "There were so many stakeholders and we felt maybe we're too small for this."

After reflecting on the organization's goal to improve public services, AI4GOV went full steam ahead to do their part in fighting the pandemic.

Maria Rosario S. Vergeire, officer-in-charge at the DoH, said that the women in the *Pintig* documentary are just one part of the large population of women who helped the country through the health crisis.

"In this time full of doubt, we had to show people that in these kinds of situations, women can make concrete actions and directions along with feeling the compassion and emotions that we have," she said.

## Waterborne diseases follow in storm's wake

RESIDENTS of areas flooded by Severe Tropical Storm Paeng (international name: Nalgae) should guard against possible outbreaks of waterborne and foodborne illnesses, influenza-like illnesses, leptospirosis, and dengue, a health official said.

The Department of Health (DoH) has activated the Inter-Agency Committee on Environmental Health, set to convene on Nov. 4, to discuss ways to address acute gastroenteritis and diarrhea cases, as well as cholera outbreaks, that may be caused by the onslaught of recent typhoons and floods.

According to a DoH surveillance report, leptospirosis deaths from

January–October 2022 rose to 332 from 164 in the same period last year. Food- and waterborne diseases such as cholera and dengue likewise increased to 37 from 6, and 559 from 220, respectively. Acute bloody diarrhea, meanwhile, decreased to 67 for the current period, from 87 last year.

"The public should watch out for these diseases, especially those who are in evacuation centers. The rain and cold weather can cause colds, cough, and fever, which can easily transmit from one person to another," said Dr. Ariel I. Valencia, chief of the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batan-

gas, Rizal and Quezon) health office, in a Nov. 1 statement.

"Handwashing, proper disposal of masks, and physical distancing should be observed. Inform officials of evacuation centers immediately if you have symptoms of these diseases," he added.

Tacloban, one of the areas in the Eastern Visayas affected by Paeng, reported six cholera cases on Oct. 28. Fifty-six other patients have also been confined at the government-run Eastern Visayas Medical Center and Tacloban City Hospital due to severe cases of dehydration. — **Patricia B. Mirasol**

### SPOT PRICES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2022

METAL	
PALLADIUM free \$/troy oz	1,823.70
PALLADIUM JMI base, \$/troy oz	1,845.00
PLATINUM free \$/troy oz	929.50
PLATINUM JMI base \$/troy oz	938.00
KRUGGERAND, fob \$/troy oz	1,636.00
IRIDIUM, whs rot, \$/troy oz	3,940.00
RHODIUM, whs rot, \$/troy oz	14,090.00
GRAINS (October 27, 2022)	
(FOB Bangkok basis at every Thursday)	
FRAGRANT (100%) 1 <sup>st</sup> Class, \$/ton	904.00
FRAGRANT (100%) 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class, \$/ton	876.00
RICE (5%) White Thai- \$/ton	426.00
RICE (10%) White Thai- \$/ton	424.00
RICE (15%) White Thai- \$/ton	421.00
RICE (25%) White Thai- \$/ton (Super)	421.00
BROKER RICE A-1 Super \$/ton	383.00
FOOD	
COCOA ICCO Dly (SDR/mt)	1,741.26
COCOA ICCO \$/mt	2,238.25
COFFEE ICA comp '2001 cts/lb	159.30
SUGAR ISA FOB Daily Price, Carib. port cts/lb	16.81
SUGAR ISA 15-day ave.	17.62

### LIFFE COFFEE

New Robusta 10 MT - \$/ton

	High	Low	Sett	Psett
Nov.	1,900	1,882	1,877	1,871
Jan.	1,879	1,846	1,853	1,849
Mar.	1,862	1,836	1,840	1,837
May	1,851	1,826	1,830	1,827

### LIFFE COCOA

(Ldn)-10 MT-E/ton

	High	Low	Sett	Psett
Dec.	1,923	1,886	1,919	1,894
Mar.	1,887	1,852	1,885	1,861
May	1,846	1,817	1,845	1,826
July	1,838	1,811	1,836	1,820

### COCONUT

MANILA COPRA (based on 6% moisture)	
Peso/100kg	Buyer/Seller
Lag/Ozn/Luc	22 3,500.00/3,550.00
Philippine Coconut Oil - Crude	
CIF NY/NOLA	55.00
PALM OIL RAIL/NOLA	58.00
COCONUT OIL (PHIL/IDN), \$ per ton,	
CIF Europe	
Nov./Dec.'22	0.00/1,000.00
Dec./Jan.'23	1,055.00/1,080.00
Jan./Feb.'23	1,075.00/1,090.00
Feb./Mar.'23	1,030.00/1,100.00

### LONDON METAL EXCHANGE

LME FINAL CLOSING PRICES, US\$/MT	
3 MOS	
ALUMINUM H.G.	2,222.00
ALUMINUM Alloy	1,600.00
COPPER	7,450.00
LEAD	1,973.00
NICKEL	21,809.00
TIN	17,631.00
ZINC	2,697.00

## Oil dips on US output rise, China usage doubts

HOUSTON — Oil prices fell on Monday on expectations that US production could rise and as weaker economic data out of China and the country's widening coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) curbs weighed on demand.

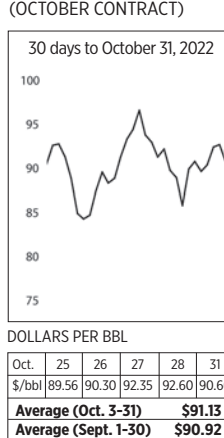
Global benchmark Brent crude futures dropped by 94 cents or 0.98% to \$94.83 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude fell by \$1.37 to \$86.53 a barrel, a 1.6% loss.

Both benchmarks notched their first monthly gains since May. Oil output in the United States climbed to nearly 12 million barrels per day in August, the highest since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, monthly government data showed.

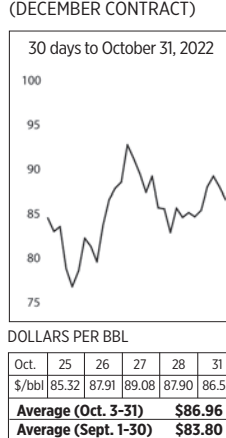
US President Joseph R. Biden was set to call on oil and gas companies to invest some of their record profits in lowering costs for American families, a White House official said.

Mr. Biden will call on Congress to consider requiring oil companies to pay tax penalties and face other restrictions, the official said. The

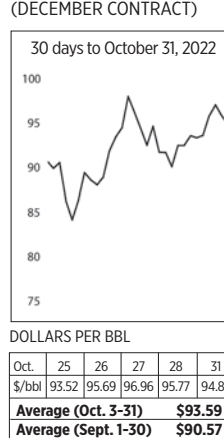
#### ASIA-DUBAI (OCTOBER CONTRACT)



#### NEW YORK-WTI (DECEMBER CONTRACT)



#### LONDON-BRENT (DECEMBER CONTRACT)



Source: REUTERS

president has previously pushed oil companies to raise production rather than use profits for share buybacks and dividends.

The administration has also relied on releasing supplies from the Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) to ease a supply crunch. About 1.9 million barrels were released from the SPR last week as part of the government's plan to release 180 million barrels.

Meanwhile, factory activity in China, the world's largest crude im-

porter, fell unexpectedly in October, an official survey showed on Monday, weighed down by softening global demand and strict COVID-19 restrictions that hit production.

"The purchasing managers' index (PMI) data contracting adds to the post-China congress party blues for oil markets. It is not difficult to draw a straight line from weaker PMIs to China's COVID-zero policy," said Stephen Innes, managing partner of SPI Asset Management.

"So long as COVID-zero remains entrenched, it will continue to thwart oil bulls."

Chinese cities are stepping up zero-COVID curbs as outbreaks widen, dampening hopes of a rebound in demand.

Strict COVID-19 curbs in China have hit economic and business activity, curtailing oil demand. China's crude oil imports for the first three quarters of the year fell by 4.3% year on year for the first annual decline for the period since at least 2014.

Meanwhile, the euro zone is likely to enter recession, with its October business activity contracting at the fastest in nearly two years, according to a survey by S&P Global.

European Central Bank policymakers are standing behind plans to keep raising interest rates, even if it pushes the bloc into recession and stirs political resentment.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on Monday raised its forecast for medium and long-term oil demand and said \$12.1 trillion of investment is needed to meet this demand despite the energy transition. — **Reuters**

## Wall Street ends strong month on weaker note

NEW YORK — US stocks lost ground on Monday, with the major indexes closing out a strong month of gains on a weaker foot, as investor focus turned to the US Federal Reserve's policy meeting this week.

The central bank is widely expected to raise interest rates by 75 basis points on Wednesday at the conclusion of its two-day policy meeting, but investors will look for any signals the Fed may be considering a deceleration in interest rate hikes in the future.

Hopes the Fed may pull back from its aggressive interest rate hike policy have lifted equities in recent weeks, with the S&P 500 notching a gain of nearly 9% over the past two weeks. The Dow booked its biggest monthly percentage gain since January 1976 and biggest October percentage gain since at least 1900.

Comments from Fed officials after the policy decision as well as labor market data later this week will help shape market expectations for future hikes starting at the December meeting.

"It is pretty much a foregone conclusion, it has been almost a 100% probability for at least three weeks now that it would be three quarters of a point and very little chance that it is going to

be more or less than that, but there is always apprehension on the part of everyone just waiting for that to be done," said Randy Frederick, managing director at Charles Schwab in Austin, Texas.

"People are going to be digesting what is said on Wednesday about what happens on Dec. 14. My hope is that would be a quarter point. In reality, it is probably going to be half a point, but even that would be a very positive sign for the market."

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell by 128.85 points or 0.39% to 32,732.95; the S&P 500 lost 29.08 points or 0.75% to 3,871.98; and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 114.31 points or 1.03% to 10,988.15.

For the month, the Dow jumped by 13.95%; the S&P climbed by 7.99%; and the Nasdaq advanced by 3.9%.

Apple, Inc. lost 1.54% after a Reuters report said production of its iPhones could slump by as much as 30% next month due to tightening COVID-19 curbs in China.

Megacap growth names such as Amazon.com and Google-owner Alphabet which have been under pressure in the rising rate environment, were also lower, down by 0.94% and 1.85%, respectively.

Nearly all 11 S&P 500 sectors fell, with technology and communication services the worst performers with declines of more than 1%. Energy was the sole advancer ahead of remarks on oil companies by US President Joseph R. Biden later on Monday.

Energy companies such as Chevron and Exxon Mobil have handily beaten profit estimates this quarter, benefiting from surging energy prices, in contrast to Big Tech firms that have largely disappointed investors.

"Dividend stocks, energy, stuff that is short duration, industrials... that is what is working," said Eric Diton, president and managing director at the Wealth Alliance in Boca Raton, Florida.

With about half of the companies in the S&P 500 having reported their quarterly results so far, third-quarter earnings growth estimates stand at 4%, according to Refinitiv data, slightly lower than 4.1% last week.

Global Payments, Inc. slumped by 8.82% after the company forecast full-year revenue below estimates. Volume on US exchanges was 11.53 billion shares, compared with the 11.52 billion average for the full session over the last 20 trading days. — **Reuters**

## Hawkish Fed, stronger dollar set gold up for longest monthly losing spree

GOLD edged lower on Monday and was headed for its longest streak of monthly losses on record as a stronger dollar, elevated US bond yields and prospects for more rate hikes from the US Federal Reserve dented the nonyielding metal's appeal.

Spot gold fell by 0.4% to \$1,635.64 per ounce by 2:18 p.m. ET (6:18 p.m. GMT), and was set for its seventh straight monthly decline, down by about 1.5% this month.

US gold futures settled down by 0.3% to \$1,640.70.

A combination of factors from the expected rate hikes, the relative strength of the dollar and rising yields continue to pressure gold prices, said David Meger, director of metal trading at High Ridge Futures.

The dollar index rose by 0.7%, making gold more expensive for other currency holders. The benchmark 10-year Treasury yields also edged up.

The Fed is widely expected to increase interest rates by 75 basis points at the policy meeting on Nov. 2. Traders will be keen on the Fed's commentary on future rate hikes amid debate over when to downshift to smaller rate hikes.

Gold is highly sensitive to rising US interest rates because these increase the opportunity cost of holding it. Gold prices have fallen by more than \$400 since scaling above the \$2,000 per ounce level in March.

Spot silver fell by 0.3% to \$19.17 per ounce.

Platinum fell by 2% to \$925.52, but was headed for its biggest monthly gain since February 2021.

"We believe platinum's wide discount to palladium should support substitution in the car industry and lift prices over the next 12 months," UBS analysts said in a note. — **Reuters**