

## Burden of disease shifts to non-communicable ailments

Air pollution and tobacco smoking continue to be major contributors to health loss. Getty images

The 'India State Level Disease Burden' report, prepared as part of the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2016, and published in *Lancet*, has found that every State in India has a higher burden from non-communicable diseases and injuries than from infectious diseases.

The study used multiple data sources to map State-level disease burden from 333 disease conditions and injuries, and 83 risk factors for each State from 1990 to 2016. It was released by Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu here on Tuesday.

"The contribution of non-communicable diseases to health loss — fuelled by unhealthy diets, high blood pressure, and blood sugar — has doubled in India over the past two decades. Air pollution and tobacco smoking continue to be major contributors to health loss.

"However, the extent of these risk factors varies considerably across the States of India," said Dr. K. Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), one of the partners of the India State-level Disease Burden Initiative (ISDBI).

### Specific plans needed

"Many Indian States are bigger than most countries in the world. It is necessary to plan health interventions based on the specific disease burden situation of each State, many of which are no less than nations within a nation, if the existing major health inequalities between the States have to be reduced. This requires availability of the best possible disease burden and risk factors estimates for each state based on all available data using a standardized framework," said Dr. Lalit Dandona, Director of the ISDBI and Distinguished Professor at PHFI and lead author of the study.

"These estimates are now provided in three complementary outputs released today: the report, the technical paper, and the open-access visualisation tool. Discussion with policy makers suggests that these findings will be useful for planning of State health budgets, prioritisation of interventions relevant to each State, informing the government's Health Assurance Mission, monitoring of health-related Sustainable Development Goals targets in each State, assessing impact of large-scale interventions based on time trends of disease burden, and forecasting population health under various scenarios in each State," Dr. Dandona said.

"We believe that the knowledge base developing out of the ongoing work of the State-level Disease Burden Initiative can serve as a significant public good, providing increasingly more nuanced and crucial inputs for improving health of all Indians," he said.

The report, which provides the first comprehensive set of State-level disease burden data, risk factors estimates, and trends for each State in India, is expected to inform health planning with a view toward reducing health inequalities among States.

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, director-general ICMR and Secretary, Health Research, Government of India, who closely guided the work of the ISDBI, said: "The effort was to produce an open-access, good knowledge base, which has the potential of making fundamental and long-term contributions to improving health in every State of the country..."

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