

INDIA'S HEALTH REPORT READS WORSE

Relevant for: Health, Education & Human Resources | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

Indians have registered a 50% increase in the prevalence of ischemic heart disease and stroke over the period from 1990 to 2016, with the number of diabetes cases climbing from 26 million to 65 million. In the same period, the number of people ailing from chronic obstructive lung disease went up from 28 million to 55 million, according to the 'India State-level Disease Burden Initiative' report released on Wednesday.

The proportional contribution of cancers to the total loss of health in India has doubled from 1990 to 2016, but the incidence of different types of cancers varies widely between the States.

The report is a joint initiative of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, along with experts and stakeholders associated with over 100 Indian institutions.

Punjab tops list

The State-wise disease burden showed that Punjab has been ranked at the top for the burden of ischemic heart disease, followed by Tamil Nadu, and vice-versa for diabetes. West Bengal topped with the largest number of stroke cases followed by Odisha, according to the comprehensive analysis of several major non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Kerala was ranked at the top for the burden of cancer, followed by Assam.

Being overweight was found to be a major risk factor for diabetes doubled in every State of India from 1990 to 2016.

The findings have been reported in a series of five research papers published in *The Lancet Global Health*, *The Lancet Public Health*, and *The Lancet Oncology*, along with a commentary in the medical journal *The Lancet*.

Professor Balram Bhargava, Secretary, Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Director General, ICMR, said: "These papers, through detailed analysis, have elucidated disease and risk factor trends for major NCDs, and suicides, in every State, over 26 years."

He added that while it is known that NCDs have been increasing in India, a major finding of concern is that the highest rate of increase in ischemic heart disease and diabetes is in the less developed States of India.

"These States already have a high burden of chronic obstructive lung disease, and of a range of infectious and childhood diseases, so the control of NCDs in these States has to be boosted without delay," he said.

The papers showed that the proportional contribution of cancers to disease burden in India has doubled since 1990, but the incidence of individual cancers varies widely between the States, the reasons for which need to be understood better to guide prevention and control of cancer.

Ayushman Bharat

Experts noted that the insights provided by these findings are very timely for the planning of Ayushman Bharat, the National Health Protection Mission announced recently by the Prime Minister. “ICMR is also working at creating a standard treatment workflow for Ayushman Bharat,” said Dr. Bhargava.

The Council added that they are all set to make public Mahatma Gandhi's health records — general health, blood pressure data, etc. — as part of the 150th commemorative issue of the Indian Journal of Clinical Research.

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