

## 95 percent Indians wake up late to diabetes

India is becoming the diabetes capital of the world with over 50 million people affected by the lifestyle disease that is all too often discovered only in the advanced stages.

A new study conducted by doctors at the Artemis Health Institute (AHI), Gurgaon, near here, found that close to 95 percent people got to know about the disease only at an advanced stage despite the fact that they had developed obvious symptoms much earlier.

The doctors tested the blood samples of 300 people who came for a routine checkup within a span of two years and found that 15 percent of them were in pre-diabetes stage.

'Most of them knew they had obvious symptoms like increased appetite, constant thirst and high urine formation for the last few years but they did not get themselves tested until their condition deteriorated,' Ashutosh Shukla, head of internal medicine at AHI who conducted the study, told IANS.

According to Shukla, awareness and early detection are the key to managing diabetes.

'Those with risk factors like obesity, high work stress, sedentary lifestyle, faulty diet and family history of diabetes must undergo a health check-up at least once a year and those without risk factors should take it once in two years,' Shukla said.

'Diabetes no longer remains an urban phenomenon or is restricted to adults,' Nikhil Tandon, professor of endocrinology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), told IANS.

He said due to urbanisation and industrialisation, villages were now becoming towns. 'Small towns have been industrialised. So the urban-rural divide has been blurred. And this means lifestyle changes,' said the endocrinologist.

According to medicos, massive awareness campaigns should be launched by both government and educational institutions. Healthy eating habits should be taught from childhood to curb the growing threat of the lifestyle disease.

'We are seeing young children suffer from diabetes. It is only through education that we will be able to communicate the dangers of the chronic disease. Good habits start from childhood. Teachers and parents have to understand that physical exercise is important,' said Shubhash Wangoo, a diabetologist with Apollo Hospital.

He said small steps such as not serving junk food in school cafeterias, parents sending wholesome food for lunch and teachers and parents ensuring time for children to play would make a difference.

The International Diabetic Federation report released last month warned that diabetes will impose a huge economic burden on India and other countries. Apart from losing billions in productivity, the report said, India will also be spending \$2.8 billion annually on diabetes control measures by 2010.

There are estimated to be 285 million diabetic cases worldwide, accounting for seven percent of the world's population.

Diabetes, along with cardiovascular disease, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases, accounts for 60 percent of all deaths worldwide.

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