

How Should India Tackle Diabetes Load?

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About Diabetes

- **Diabetes** is a chronic medical condition where the body is unable to properly regulate blood sugar (glucose) levels due to insufficient insulin production or ineffective insulin usage. It is primarily classified into two types:

- **Type 1 Diabetes:** An autoimmune condition where the pancreas produces little or no insulin. It often occurs in childhood or adolescence and requires lifelong insulin therapy.
- **Type 2 Diabetes:** The more common type, associated with insulin resistance or insufficient insulin production. It is influenced by factors like poor diet, obesity, and physical inactivity.
- **Symptoms** include frequent urination, excessive thirst, fatigue, slow wound healing, and blurred vision. If untreated, diabetes can lead to serious complications such as heart disease, kidney damage, vision loss, and nerve damage.

Study by the Lancet on Diabetes

- A global study published in The Lancet highlights that over 800 million adults globally live with diabetes, including **212 million in India**.
- The numbers are significantly higher than the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) estimate of **100 million**, primarily due to differing testing methodologies.

Key Issues & Discrepancies Mentioned in the Study

- **Testing Differences:**
 - *The Lancet* study used HbA1C (glycated haemoglobin) values, a global standard.
 - The ICMR study followed fasting and post-prandial glucose levels, which provide lower diabetes estimates.
 - HbA1C values may overestimate diabetes prevalence due to factors like age and anaemia, leading to higher numbers.
- **Data Sources:**
 - Variability arises from multiple data sources and methods across studies.

Major Concerns

- **Rising Diabetes Prevalence:**
 - India is witnessing increasing diabetes cases due to urbanization, lifestyle changes, and obesity.
 - The disease significantly increases risks of heart disease, kidney failure, vision loss, and other complications.
- **Inequity in Treatment:**
 - Access to diabetes care is limited, especially in low- and middle-income regions.
 - Without effective prevention and early treatment, the healthcare burden could become unsustainable.

Strategies for Action

- **Urgent Prevention Measures:**
 - Mass awareness campaigns to promote healthy eating and exercise.
 - Legal restrictions on sugar-sweetened beverages and high-carb diets.
 - Policies to tackle abdominal obesity, a leading cause of diabetes in Indians.
- **Focus on Vulnerable Groups:**

- Prioritize education for women, especially post-pregnancy and during menopause.
- Enhance healthcare access in semi-urban and rural areas.

Role of Individuals

- **Lifestyle Changes:**
 - Adopting mindful eating habits and regular physical activity.
 - Reducing obesity through balanced diets and portion control.
- **Dietary Awareness:**
 - Recognizing the impact of poor diets on rising diabetes rates.

Govt. Initiatives

- **Policy Measures:**
 - Restrict unhealthy food options and make nutritious foods more affordable.
 - Provide subsidies for healthy foods and ensure free, nutritious school meals.
- **Creating Infrastructure:**
 - Establish public parks, fitness centres, and safe spaces for physical activity.
 - Encourage urban planning that promotes walkability and active lifestyles.

Conclusion

- India faces a critical challenge in managing its growing diabetes burden. Collaborative efforts from individuals, policymakers, and healthcare providers are essential to implement sustainable preventive measures and improve access to treatment.
 - As experts emphasize, the focus must remain on **prevention** at every level.
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Q1. What is the role of Pancreas?

The pancreas has dual roles – it is an organ of the digestive system and of the endocrine system. The exocrine pancreas produces enzymes that help to digest food, particularly protein. The endocrine pancreas makes the hormone insulin, which helps to control blood sugar levels.

Q2. What is the role of Insulin in our body?

The major purpose of insulin is to regulate the body's energy supply by balancing micronutrient levels during the fed state. Insulin is critical for transporting intracellular glucose to insulin-dependent cells/tissues, such as liver, muscle, and adipose tissue.

Source: [How should India tackle diabetes load?](#)