



INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Department of Health Research – Ministry Health & Family Welfare
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1 out of 8 deaths due to air pollution

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One in eight deaths in India due to air pollution: ICMR

December 7, 2018/Live Mint

'Air pollution cause of 1 in 8 deaths'

December 7, 2018/the Hindu

'Handigodu' patients to appeal for mercy killing

December 1, 2018/The Times of India

“Provide us treatment or grant us mercy killing.” That’s what patients suffering from ‘Handigodu’, a rare joint disorder, plan to ask the chief minister and the State Human Rights Commission. The Handigodu patients’ welfare association has decided to send a representation to this effect to the CM and the commission. A rare joint disorder leading to crippling and permanent disability, ‘Handigodu’ — named after a village near Sagar in Shivamogga — was first noticed in 1974. The cause of the disease has remained unknown to the medical community. Those affected suffer from low immunity, crippling and require physiotherapy.

According to the association, there are over 300 ‘Handigodu’ patients in Shivamogga and Chikkamagaluru districts and most are from the Chalavadi and Channaiah communities (Scheduled Castes). The patients are immobile due to dwarfism, joint pain and weakness. Many can’t even crawl on their limbs and are dependent on their families. The patients have been demanding a pension of Rs 5,000 per person per month. “There are many children who have kept away from school after they were diagnosed with the disorder. Scientists from **Indian Council of Medical Research** have also done research on us, but that has not helped improve our condition; we continue to suffer as our health is deteriorating. The government should either provide us medical help and get us physiotherapy or grant us permission to kill ourselves as the disorder has crippled our lives,” said Rajendra Bandagadde, 54, president, Handigodu patients’ welfare association.

Delhi-NCR Witnesses 'Very Poor' Air Quality For Sixth Consecutive Day

December 1, 2018/Outlook India

Delhi's air quality remained in the "very poor" category for the sixth consecutive day on Saturday with the meteorological conditions remaining unfavourable for dispersion of pollutants, authorities said. Over the years, India has attracted much attention to its alarming air pollution levels. In 2015, the country surpassed its economic rival and neighbour, China, to shoulder the highest burden of global premature deaths attributable to air pollution—1.8 million deaths of the total 6.5 million. **Indian Council of Medical Research's** most recent collaborative study reflects India's ongoing struggle with air pollution as it reports a disconcerting rise in the prevalence of air-pollution related illnesses between 1990 and 2016, including heart disease, chronic pulmonary diseases, cancers, respiratory illnesses and diabetes. According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, the overall air quality index (AQI) of Delhi was 322, which fell in the "very poor" category.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor" and 401 and 500 is considered to be "severe". The CPCB said in 27 areas of the national capital, the air quality was in the "very poor" category, while in five areas, it was recorded in the "poor" category

Family umbilical cord blood pool to cure a host of blood-related disorders



December 1, 2018/The New Indian Express

NEW DELHI: With growing evidence that Umbilical Cord Blood Transplant (UCBT) is one of the major treatment options for various genetic and blood-related diseases, the concept of cord blood pool banking is gradually developing in India.

Doctors say that over 95 per cent of blood-related disorders can be treated using umbilical cord blood (UCB) from a donor. Keeping this in mind, a cord blood bank has introduced the first Family Umbilical Cord Blood Pool Banking concept in the country. MyCord, a vertical of CelluGen, a government-licensed cord blood bank, advocates that each UCB unit be privately banked and stored as part of a pool, thereby providing an easy access to patients to the best-matched cord blood unit.

"The idea behind the 'Family Cord Blood Pool Bank' is to create a balance between insufficient cord blood units in public banks and the utility of stored blood units in pool banks for allogeneic use with human leukocyte antigen (HLA) typing," Lalit Jaiswal, the director of CelluGen said. HLA typing is done prior to cord blood storage to find the compatible cord blood unit at the time of requirement. Storing cord blood units without HLA typing renders them ineffective for use by others.

Even doctors advise parents looking for umbilical cord blood banking to consider pool banking, which allows access to others' cord blood units when needed.

The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** guidelines of 2007 and 2012 state, use of stored umbilical cord blood for self-use is practically nil. Its 2017 guideline says, "So far there is no scientific basis for preservation of cord blood for future self-use and this practice, therefore, raises ethical and social concerns."

Taking guard on Zika

December 2, 2018/the Hindu

Every year, several lives across the world are lost or debilitated due to vector-borne diseases such as dengue and chikungunya. In India, the first case of dengue was detected in 1964 in Kolkata, with numbers rising due to a lack of vector control, unplanned urbanisation, climate change and varying immunological reasons. The same holds true for chikungunya, another debilitating mosquito-transmitted disease. After remaining incipient for almost 32 years, chikungunya re-emerged as a deadly infection, in 2006, with more than 1.5 million cases reported in India, and causing deaths or long-lasting physical impairment in millions of individuals around the globe. While India struggled with the double burden of dengue and chikungunya, a covert virus called Zika sprang into action. Zika was first discovered in monkeys in Uganda in 1947 and remained dormant for several decades. India had gathered its first evidence of Zika in 1954, through a preliminary study conducted by the **Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR)** National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune. Limited knowledge suggested that the Zika virus caused a milder form of dengue viral illness: low grade fever, headache and malaise in 20% of infected individuals, whereas 80% of those infected remain asymptomatic. The African strain of Zika transformed itself and in its new 'avatar', caused major outbreaks in the Yap islands and French Polynesia in 2007 and 2013, respectively. While the world was still oblivious of its potential, Zika became relentless with reports of a sudden, unexplained spike in the number of babies born with microcephaly (small heads) and brain damage in Brazil and other parts of Latin America, baffling public health professionals. Prior to this

outbreak, there was very limited research on Zika, with about 15 10-15 articles describing the accidental outbreaks in humans.



[‘HIV self-screening test has potential to become major game-changer in country’](#)

December 2, 2018/The Indian Express

December 1 marked the 30th anniversary of World AIDS Day. On the occasion, Director of NARI, Dr Samiran Panda, underscores the importance of HIV testing. This year's theme is 'Know your status'. Panda tells Anuradha Mascarenhas that there is a need for active participation by both youth and 'at risk' population groups

Is HIV still a threat?

India has many success stories to share with rest of the world pertaining to HIV containment, including generation of estimated numbers of people living with HIV in the country at regular intervals, establishment of a countrywide sentinel surveillance system as well as ensuring HIV treatment for over 1.2 million people. However, HIV still remains a concern as we are yet to reach a stage where the HIV transmission can be declared as non-issue in the country.

What has been NARI's role in fight against HIV infection?

The National AIDS Research Institute (NARI), one of the premier organisations under **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, was established in 1992. Since inception, its vision has been to build a research capacity of distinction, which is capable of facing the growing challenges of HIV/AIDS in the country. We are painstakingly following our dreams in this direction and have also contributed to the national AIDS control programme by generating evidence for action. For example, NARI, at the national level, plays a crucial role in quality control of HIV diagnosis, CD4 count and viral load estimation.

[Pregnancy is safe for breast cancer survivors: Experts](#)

December 2, 2018/Times Now News

New Delhi: Breast cancer, the most prevalent cancer among Indian women, cannot deter motherhood, if intervention takes place at the right moment, say health experts. According to them, pregnancy is possible for women survivors of breast cancer -- it does not increase risk of recurrence and neither does it cause any harm to the baby. "Yes, pregnancy is possible for breast cancer patients. Currently there is no reason or evidence to believe that becoming pregnant after treatment for breast cancer can cause any risk to the mother or the baby," Upasna Saxena, Consultant (Radiation Oncology), at Mumbai's HCG Cancer Centre, told IANS. "It is possible for women to continue with their pregnancy even while diagnosed with breast cancer and take treatments tailored to the stage of their pregnancy concurrently. They can go on to deliver healthy babies," added Kanchan Kaur, Associate Director, Cancer Institute at Medanta in Gurugram. However, for some even "natural pregnancy is possible," Kaur stated. In a striking case from the hospital, Paula, 33, from Rwanda, conceived naturally and delivered a healthy baby five years after she was diagnosed with breast cancer, the doctor said. According to a report from the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, India had 14 lakh cancer patients in 2016 and this number is expected to increase. "Breast cancer is currently the most common cancer among Indian women, both in terms of incidence as well as mortality, with proportional prevalence in younger

age-groups being higher than the global average." "The age standardised rate is approximately 25.8 per one lakh women and is expected to rise to 35 per one lakh women in 2026," the report stated.



[Sharing outbreak data](#)

December 3, 2018/the Hindu

The recent Zika outbreaks in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are a reminder of how poor Indian authorities are at sharing health data. Neither Rajasthan, which saw 154 cases, nor M.P., which saw 127, published the day-wise numbers of confirmed infections. Meanwhile, even though the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has genetically sequenced Zika viruses from five patients in Rajasthan, it hasn't published these sequences in any open access databases such as Gen Bank. Both daily case counts and genetic sequences of the viruses circulating in India can be extremely useful to epidemiologists studying Zika. Daily case counts can show how quickly the virus is spreading. Genetic sequences can help us understand from where the virus came to India and for how long it had been circulating in Rajasthan and M.P. before it was detected. Using data from previous epidemics, scientists have been able to estimate the rate at which the Zika virus mutates. So, by comparing genome sequences from multiple patients, they can estimate when these viruses diverged from their most recent common ancestor, giving an idea of when the virus entered India. If this date is much earlier than the date of the first detected case (September in Rajasthan), that would mean a larger number of patients were infected, which in turn could help customise our outbreak response.

[Anemia major cause of disability in JK: Study](#)

December 4, 2018/Greater Kashmir

A latest study on health parameters has shown that anemia is leading cause of disability in J&K. Since 1990, anemia has jumped from 13th spot to 5th in terms of leading cause of death and disability (combined) in J&K, according to Health of Nation's States Report-2017 by **Indian Council of Medical Research**. While the study is an indication that incidence of diseases which cause deaths such as diarrhoea, tuberculosis, measles and others have come down, anemia remains a greater risk to women, men and children in the state. According to National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 half of J&K women aged from 15 to 49 and not expecting a child were found to be anemic. The figures are more or less same for expecting mothers, according to the survey, with little variation in rural and urban women. The survey reported incidence of anemia in men (aged 15 to 49) to be 20 percent, implying one among every five men is anemic, a condition in which a person has low level of red blood cells in the body. But, as a matter of concern, as per the study, 54 percent children aged between 6 months and five years were also found to be anemic in J&K. A senior doctor said not many would think of anemia as disabling. "However, over the years, medical research has elucidated mammoth effects of anemia on mental and physical abilities of a person. If addressed, something that is not very difficult to do, a person's quality of life and performance on daily tasks, including academics can show a tremendous improvement," the doctor said. This health condition has been associated with loss of physical function.

71% Indians have poor muscle health

December 4, 2018/Hindustan Times



About 68% people in India are protein deficient, while 71% have poor muscle health, a recent survey has pointed out. Citing reports, experts on Monday said 84% of Indian vegetarians and 65% of non-vegetarian diets are protein deficient. “According to our latest survey with IPSOS, a leading global market and opinion research firm, around 68% of people have lower protein content in their body than adequate and 71% of the people have poor muscle health,” InBody Clinical Executive Dr Ankita Ghag said in a statement. The findings stated a correlation between poor muscle health and protein deficiency in India which needs to be addressed, she added. “We believe there is a need to build awareness about the importance of muscle health amongst Indians and find appropriate solutions,” Ghag said. Referring to a Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) study in 2017, nutritionist Kavita Devgan said 84% of Indian vegetarians and 65% of non-vegetarian diets are protein deficient. Good muscle health is not only a key for an active lifestyle, but also for carrying out daily physical activities to maintain a healthy life, Joshi said. As per the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) given by **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** for Indians, 0.8 to 1 gm protein per kg body weight per day is the requirement of a normal, sedentary person without any disease.

Mumbai: Researchers warn of second scrub typhus outbreak in Vidarbha

December 6, 2018/Indian Express

After 30 deaths were recorded in three months this year, veterinary researchers have warned of a second wave of scrub typhus in Vidarbha, expected during the harvest season in late January. In its first ever outbreak in Vidarbha, 200 cases of scrub typhus were reported between August and October. Even as the infection is on the decline, veterinary researchers expect it to resurface during the harvest season. Thirty-five deaths have been reported across Maharashtra while over 300 cases have been recorded with the maximum in Nagpur (101) and Nagpur Rural (60). Twenty-seven of the 35 deaths were reported from the two areas between August and October. Scrub typhus is a bacterial infection spread by mites in agricultural and shrubby land. The first such case in the state this year was suspected in the Government Medical College (GMC), Nagpur, when doctors saw ischar- cigarette butt-like blackish marks- on the skin of a few patients. The first death was of a Madhya Pradesh resident undergoing treatment at GMC.

The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** in 2015 released guidelines for treatment and diagnosis of the infection, stating that the infection remains undiagnosed in several patients. Researchers said that doctors mostly test for dengue, malaria, H1N1 and leptospirosis infection when presented with classic fever, cough and cold symptoms, delaying possible diagnosis of scrub typhus.

“In 20 per cent patients of scrub typhus, we see classical symptoms of ischar marks. In the rest, we can only diagnose the disease through other clinical manifestations like fever, cough, cold. Now that the disease has spread, doctors will actively test for scrub typhus,” said Bansod.

One in 8 deaths in India because of air pollution: Lancet

December 6, 2018/Medibulletin

India with 18% of the global population has a disproportionately high 26% of the global premature deaths and disease burden due to air pollution. The first comprehensive estimates of deaths, disease burden, and life expectancy reduction associated with air pollution in each state of India was published today in *The Lancet Planetary Health*. The findings are as per the India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative, a joint initiative of the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

The average life expectancy in India would have been 1.7 years higher if the air pollution level were less than the minimal level causing health loss

Releasing the findings, **Prof. Balram Bhargava**, Secretary, Department of Health Research

said “It is important to have robust estimates of the health impact of air pollution in every state of India in order to have a reference for improving the situation. Household air pollution is reducing in India, facilitated by the Pradhan Mantri Ujjawla Yojana. There is increasing political momentum in India to address air pollution. The findings reported today systematically document the variations among states, which would serve as a useful guide for making further progress in reducing the adverse impact of air pollution in the country.”

1 out of 8 deaths due to air pollution

December 6, 2018/the Hindu Business Line

One out of every eight deaths in India can be attributed to air pollution, a study conducted by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and the Union Health Ministry says. In 2017, 12.4 lakh people died due to air pollution, accounting for 12.5 per cent of total deaths in the country.

The study titled ‘The impact of air pollution on deaths, disease burden and life expectancy across the States of India’ is the culmination of the work of 76 experts from various institutes of repute who came together to produce evidence corroborating the fact that air pollution kills. The findings have been published in *The Lancet*.

Earlier, it was estimated that air pollution could take away four years of a person’s life. Now, more reliable estimates claim that the average life expectancy of an Indian — which is 69 years — is reduced by 1.7 years due to air pollution.

Indoor pollution

While 6.7 lakh people are estimated to die of ambient (outdoor) air pollution, 4.8 lakh die of indoor air pollution as they use solid fuels for cooking. In 2017, over 75 per cent of the population used solid fuels in Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha.

Air pollution leads to lower respiratory tract infections, chronic pulmonary obstructive disorder, Ischemic heart disease, stroke, diabetes, lung cancer and cataract. Up to 369 ground-level monitoring stations and satellite-based aerosol optical depth data have been calibrated to measure outdoor air pollution. “There

were many rural areas where ground-level monitoring stations did not exist. We had to take satellite data and then calibrate it accordingly to arrive at the estimates,” said Lalit Dandona, Professor, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI).



One in eight deaths in India due to air pollution: ICMR

December 7, 2018/Live Mint

New Delhi: Air pollution caused one in eight deaths in India last year, besides lowering the average life expectancy by 1.7 years, the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** said in a report on Thursday. It said air pollution contributed more to the disease burden of Indians than consuming tobacco.

The first comprehensive estimates of deaths, disease burden and life expectancy reduction associated with air pollution across states were collated under the India State Level Disease Burden Initiative—a joint initiative of the ICMR, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), in collaboration with the health ministry. The findings have also been published in *The Lancet Planetary Health*. About 77% of the populace is exposed to outdoor air pollution levels breaching the safe limit set by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, said the report. North India recorded particularly high levels of pollutants. In 2017, the mean ambient particulate matter PM_{2.5} annual exposure of 90 g/m³ was one of the highest in the world. The highest PM_{2.5} exposure level was in Delhi, followed by Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana. The report said 1.24 million deaths in India in 2017 were due to air pollution, which included 670,000 deaths due to outdoor particulate matter air pollution and 480,000 deaths due to household air pollution.

‘Air pollution cause of 1 in 8 deaths’

December 7, 2018/the Hindu

India, with 18% of the world’s population, has a disproportionately high 26% of the global premature deaths and disease burden due to air pollution. Moreover, one in eight deaths in India was attributable to air pollution in India in 2017, making it a leading risk factor for death. This is according to the first comprehensive estimates of reduction in life expectancy associated with air pollution in each State, published by the India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative, a venture 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. These research findings published in *The Lancet Planetary Health* were released on Thursday at the ICMR.

Key findings

The key findings from the paper include the fact that 12.4 lakh deaths in India in 2017 were due to air pollution, which included 6.7 lakh deaths due to outdoor particulate matter air pollution and 4.8 lakh deaths due to household air pollution. Over half of the deaths due to air pollution were in persons less than 70 years of age. In 2017, 77% population of India was exposed to ambient particulate matter PM_{2.5} above the recommended limit by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The report states that the highest PM_{2.5} exposure level was in Delhi, followed by the other north Indian States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana.

One in eight deaths in India because of air pollution: ICMR Study

December 6, 2018/Drug Today Medical Times

The findings are a joint initiative of the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, Public Health Foundation of India and Institute for Health Metrics and were released by the Director General, ICMR, Dr Balram Bhargava, on December 6, 2018. The study shows that India with 18% of the global population has a disproportionately high 26% of the global premature deaths and disease burden due to air pollution. Over half of the 12.4 lakh deaths in the country attributable to air pollution in 2017 were in persons younger than 70 years. The life expectancy in India would have been 1.7 years higher if the air pollution level was less than the minimal level causing health loss, it said. Dr Bhargava said, "The research findings reported today systematically document the variations among all states, which would serve as a useful lead for making further progress in reducing the bad impact of air pollution in India." Dr S Venkatesh, Director General of Health Services, Union Health Ministry, told DTMT, "We are undertaking a number of initiatives for experts to convene in order to develop strategies that would increase awareness among communities on what each one of us could do to reduce the bad impact of air pollution on health, which would benefit from the state-specific findings reported by this study." Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Delhi, Haryana, and Punjab had some of the highest ambient particulate matter pollution exposure in India.

With regards,

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