Non-communicable diseases rising in non-tribal rural regions of M.P.

Burden moderate in urban areas due to awareness: National Health Mission

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Non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and cancer are posing a bigger challenge in non-tribal rural areas of Madhya Pradesh than in urban areas owing to a rapidly growing rate of incidence and the lack of awareness, according to the National Health Mission (NHM).

Screening of 30 lakh persons above the age of 30 across the State in December has revealed that Raipurna, Hoshangabad and Seoni districts face the highest burden of the diseases.

‘More awareness’
“We anticipated urban districts like Bhopal, Gwalior or Indore to fare the worst,” said Saloni Sidana, Additional Mission Director, State unit of the National Health Mission. “More awareness, as in the case of urban areas, translates into patients undergoing treatment despite a high incidence. As a result, the burden is moderate in urban areas, but due to low awareness in rural areas, it is increasing there,” said Dr. Sidana.

During the screening drive, taken up under the Centre’s Non Communicable Disease Control Programme, what surprised officials was the low incidence in the 89 tribal blocks in the State, which has largest tribal population in the country, despite the low awareness levels.

“Trans fatty acids when consumed in hydrogenated forms is a major cause of hypertension or high blood pressure levels,” said Dr. Sidana. “Cooking oil is still reused for the purpose in several rural areas.”

The programme, which was launched recently and under which 86% of those screened have been put under treatment, focusses on identifying non-communicable diseases at the primary health-centre (PHC) level itself, and ensuring treatment up to the district-level and follow-ups with patients to continue medication.

First phase
In the first phase, 1,200 PHCs were roped in. In contrast to patients visiting a health centre, ASHA workers now go door-to-door to draft family profiles and screen them for the non-communicable diseases, added Dr. Sidana.

Meanwhile, the India Hypertension Control Initiative, supported by the World Health Organisation, is catering to patients above 18 suffering from the diseases in Bhopal, Sehore, Chhindwara, Seoni, Ujjain and Ratlam districts, said Ashish Saxena, Deputy Director, State Health Department, at a seminar on hypertension organised by Consumer Voice in Bhopal. Of those screened, 2,55,420 were diagnosed for hypertension, he said. Of the country’s 100 districts with the highest prevalence of hypertension, 15 were in Madhya Pradesh.