

57 per cent spike in cardiovascular problems during lockdown



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Respiratory disorders caused by COVID-19 took centre-stage during the pandemic, overshadowing other burgeoning health issues, particularly cardiovascular disorders (CVDs). Incidences of new-onset and worsening heart problems are being highlighted by medical experts across the world. A 2019 report published by the American Heart Association placed India's burden of heart disorders at a worrisome 54.5 million people, with one in four deaths attributable to CVDs such as Ischemic Heart Disorder or Stroke. With the recent uptick in heart diseases over the last few months, people around the world, especially in India, are faced with the likelihood of cardiovascular concerns at a large scale in the near future.

Dr Partap Chauhan, Director, Jiva Ayurveda said, "Before lockdown, our doctors consulted 748 cases for cardiovascular diseases, during the complete lockdown, we got 322 cases of CVDs and post-lockdown, our doctors have consulted around 776 cases through our telemedicine centre and clinics."

Understanding the causes behind the surge

The availability of quality medical care and the fear of contagion is one of the few common causes for the worsening condition of patients with pre-existing heart problems. In addition to that, the sudden and disproportionate increase in causative

factors such as stress, anxiety, obesity, and physical inactivity is pushing the pre-CVD segment of people in their late 40s and with existing co-morbidities into becoming new patients of CVD.

Isolation, loss of employment, financial dilemmas, and the emotional burden of being away from family members or bereavement have made matters worse.

Dr Chauhan added, “The psychological effects (loneliness, stress, anxiety, isolation, unemployment fear and economic burden) of the pandemic combined with other lifestyle factors like smoking and drinking, irregular eating habits, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity may increase CVD cases during the pandemic.”

Dissecting the trend of recent CVD cases

During the initial days of the lockdown, people were relieved of the mundane burdens of daily commutes and work stress, they also had more time with their families which positively impact heart health. Unfortunately, as days progressed, the usual causes of stress were replaced by financial burdens, unemployment, further uncertainties, boredom, and lack of sleep which had a cumulative adverse effect on cardiovascular health.

“A major shift in the trend of CVDs observed during the lockdown was that people in their 30-40s were getting heart attacks and suffering from other cardiac problems, especially in the metros like Delhi and Mumbai. At Jiva, we had the maximum number of cases from the Maharashtra region (150+ cases), followed by Delhi (200+ cases), Uttar Pradesh (300+ cases) and Haryana (110+ cases), of which around 1000 were males and 480 were females,” added Dr Chauhan.

It must be noted that most of these cases also had an observable trend in co-morbidity. Doctors consulted 670 cases for hypertension, followed by 216 cases of Hypercholesterolemia and 174 cases of Hridroga (other heart diseases).

Protecting the heart with Ayurveda: Preventive and curative solutions

Stress, bad diet, and emotional turmoil can take a toll on the heart. Over a period, it becomes weak and coupled with incorrect lifestyle choices such as smoking, drinking alcohol or eating junk food, the high risk of developing heart diseases goes up. Adopting an Ayurvedic lifestyle and adding Ayurvedic herbs in your daily routine can help.

“Practice yoga and pranayama to reduce stress levels. A gentle head massage or full body massage with oil relieves tension and reduces the load on your heart. Switch off highly charged TV broadcasts if it is causing you stress. Spend time cultivating what actually makes you happy, healthy and gives you peace,” advised Dr Chauhan.

Ayurvedic herbs are also known to be effective in keeping the heart healthy. Here are a couple of herbal recipes that doctors at Jiva commonly recommend for a healthy heart.

Arjun ki Chaal (White Marudah): Boil half a spoon of Arjun ki Chaal in a cup of water for 10-15 minutes on a low flame till it is reduced to half a cup and drink it.

Lehsun (Garlic): Boil a cup of milk with a garlic clove, cinnamon, honey, and drink in the morning. You can also start your day by eating a clove of garlic to enjoy its heart-friendly benefits.

Jiva Ayurveda is one of the leading Ayurvedic telemedicine organizations in the world with over 8,000 daily consultations. Over the years, thousands of heart patients have benefited from personalized treatment at Jiva. Case in point, Sanjay Lal, a 49-year-old resident of Agra reported complete relief in his heart condition (Angina with Dyslipidemia) after three months of treatment at Jiva.