

6. Non-Communicable Diseases – Health

India experienced an increase in mortality risk from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) from 2010–2019.

Key Findings on NCD Mortality in India

Overall Mortality Trends (2010–2019 vs 2000–2010) – Mortality from NCDs rose by 2.1% among females. Mortality rose only by 0.1% among males, showing slower growth in men compared to women.

Premature Mortality (Probability of dying from a chronic disease before age 80) –

1. Females –

1. 2001 → 46.7%
2. 2010 → 46.6% (slight decline)
3. 2019 → 48.7% (notable rise)

2. Males –

1. 2001 → 56%
2. 2010 → 57.8%
3. 2019 → 57.9% (consistently higher than women)

Gender Insights – Men consistently face higher risk of premature NCD-related deaths compared to women. However, women are showing a faster rise in NCD mortality in recent years, pointing to changing lifestyles, stress levels, and health access issues.

NCDs

Definition – Long-lasting, chronic diseases that are not spread person-to-person.

Common Types –

1. Cardiovascular diseases (heart attacks, strokes).
2. Cancers.
3. Diabetes.
4. Chronic respiratory diseases (asthma, COPD).
5. Chronic kidney disease, neurological disorders.

Global Concern – NCDs are the leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly 70% of all deaths.

Causes of Rising NCD Burden in India

Lifestyle Factors –

1. Unhealthy diets (high in sugar, salt, and fats).
2. Sedentary lifestyles and low physical activity.
3. Tobacco use and alcohol/substance abuse.

Environmental & Socio-economic Factors –

1. Rapid urbanization → pollution, overcrowding, stress.
2. Ageing population → higher vulnerability to chronic illnesses.
3. Poverty & inequality → restricted access to preventive care and nutritious food.

Changing food habits →
processed/packaged foods replacing
traditional diets.

Other Contributors –

1. **Air pollution** – Both outdoor (vehicles, industries) and indoor (biomass fuel use).
2. **Chronic stress** – Urban pressures, occupational hazards, mental health burden.



Major National Initiatives to Combat NCDs

National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD) -

Launched in 2010, expanded in 2023. Covers major NCDs like diabetes, hypertension, cancer, heart disease, chronic kidney disease, and stroke. Provides early detection, screening, treatment, and referral at primary healthcare level.

75/25 Initiative (2023) - Target - Provide standardized care to 75 million people with hypertension and diabetes by 2025. Aims to improve detection, treatment adherence, and risk factor management.

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) - Provides ₹5 lakh health insurance coverage per family/year for secondary and tertiary care, including NCD treatments. Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (upgraded PHCs/Sub-Centres) serve as community hubs for NCD screening and management.

Eat Right India Movement (FSSAI-led) - Focus on safe, nutritious, and sustainable diets. Campaigns to reduce salt, sugar, and trans-fat in packaged foods. Encourages food fortification and public health nutrition awareness.

Fit India Movement (2019) - Promotes active lifestyles, exercise, yoga, and healthy habits. Schools, workplaces, and communities are encouraged to adopt fitness pledges and programs.

Challenges in NCD Control

Health System Gaps - Limited trained manpower, uneven availability of diagnostics and medicines.

Awareness Deficit - Many individuals remain unaware of their NCD risk until late stages.

Financial Burden - NCD treatment costs are often catastrophic, especially for low-income households.

Behavioural Barriers - Lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, quitting tobacco) are difficult to sustain without community and policy support.

Urban-Rural Divide - Access to quality care and awareness is much lower in rural India compared to cities.

Way Forward

Preventive Approach - Strengthen community awareness, school health programs, and mass campaigns on lifestyle changes.

Integrated Primary Healthcare - Use Ayushman Arogya Mandirs as hubs for NCD screening, counselling, and follow-up.

Technology Use - Telemedicine, digital health apps, and AI-based screening tools for early detection.

Affordable Access - Expand insurance coverage, subsidize essential medicines, and strengthen Jan Aushadhi scheme.

Multi-sectoral Action - Coordinate across health, urban planning, food safety, education, and environment sectors.

Focus on Women and Youth - Given rising female NCD mortality and early onset in young adults, tailored strategies are needed.

Conclusion

NCDs are a major public health challenge for India, with rising mortality and premature deaths, especially among men. While the government has launched multiple initiatives (NP-NCD, 75/25, PM-JAY, Eat Right, Fit India), a stronger focus on prevention, awareness, and equitable access to healthcare is needed. Building a healthy lifestyle culture, reducing environmental risks, and empowering communities will be key to reducing the NCD burden in India over the coming decades.

Source - <https://indianexpress.com/article/health-wellness/lancet-study-finds-mortality-risk-rose-among-indians-between-2010-and-2019-10243773/>