

RESEARCH ARTICLE

CURRENT STATUS OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE IN INDIA

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Received 17th December, 2020; Accepted 10th January, 2021; Published 28th February, 2021

ABSTRACT

The Indian ancient medicine system such as the Ayurveda worked on the principals of prevention. In India, the preventive healthcare segment is on the rise and the need for new trends in preventive care and medicine is very much essential especially during any pandemic situation such as the scenario faced during COVID 19 pandemic. The aim of preventive medicine is the absence of disease, either by preventing the occurrence of a disease or by halting a disease and averting resulting complications after its onset. The Government of India has also launched many programs keeping in mind the idea of prevention such as Ayushman Bharat: Focus on Preventive and promotive health, Fit India movement, Eat Right India, etc. The present challenge of preventive medicine is to motivate the individual to practice his own prevention as long as new measures and implementation is accurate and explicit covering nursing care, medication, therapy, surgery and other treatments. Possible means of achieving this motivation are described and many require the active participation of the primary care physician or nurse.

Key words: Preventive Medicine, Status

INTRODUCTION

Good health is an outcome of fitness in both mind and body. Our traditional Indian system of medicine such as Ayurveda worked on the principle of prevention. Indian physicians, long before the British colonization, focused on how to prevent the disease before it happened. However a host of diseases trouble our current generation due to poor nutrition, poor mental and emotional health which are only being taken care through drugs. These can weaken our body's immune system and make them susceptible to lifestyle related diseases. The rising healthcare expenditure has exposed the need for early detection and prevention of such diseases. Preventive medicine is exactly what it sounds like — it aims to prevent sickness before it happens. The ideology behind preventive medicine focuses on protecting, promoting, and maintaining health and well-being. It also aims to avert disease, disability, and death on an individual basis, as well as on a large scale in communities. Prophylaxis includes the identification and minimization of disease risk factors, existing disease course improvement and early disease detection through screening. Preventive screenings and services help to assess and reduce the risk of diseases and conditions such as hypertension and treating it before it manifests in the body as a marker for a more chronic and fatal disease like stroke. In the past, many diseases have been conquered by doing things for the individual. The present challenge of preventive medicine is to motivate the individual to practice his own prevention. However, this is difficult in India, as a major section of the population approaches for medical help after their health deteriorates much beyond help. Studies have shown about 70% of the cancer patients consult doctors at the terminal stage.

Similarly, another government study found that there was an 11.8% prevalence of diabetes in India and only 5.3% were detected within one year. Although the Indian urban population has access to reliable screening methods and medications, such health benefits are not often available to the rural patients. This makes it a challenge to identify the actual prevalence in rural India. In such a scenario it becomes imperative to have a strong healthcare industry. India is at a very important juncture and is poised on the brink of transformation. Preventive healthcare is becoming an area of focus in most countries, and India is no different. Preventive and Social Medicine (PSM) is relatively a new branch of medicine. It is often considered synonymous with Community Medicine, Public Health, and Community Health in India. All these share a common ground, i.e. prevention of disease and promotion of health. Few of the aspects included in preventive medicine are health and diagnostics monitoring, fitness and recreational sports, healthy eating, rejuvenation wellness therapies etc. A sharp rise was noted in the Indian population in fitness awareness and life management by RedSeer Consulting and they speculate that by 2022, approximately 130 million (M) health-conscious individuals will be actively taking pre-emptive measures to ensure a healthy living. The pandemic of COVID 19 has also pushed the medical fraternity towards early diagnosis and prevention. With such a fast development in the medical world, preventive medicine is expected to grow exponentially in India. The Government of India has also launched many programmed keeping in mind the idea of prevention such as Ayushman Bharat: Focus on Preventive and promotive health, Fit India movement, Eat Right India, etc. More and more people are opening up to gaining more awareness and access to preemptive healthcare information over the internet or via alternate mediums, the chances of increasing life expectancy are also expecting a considerable improvement giving India an exceptional opportunity to become a healthy nation. Unfortunately, there is

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disproportionate allocation of health resources between urban and rural areas. In addition to poverty in rural areas, there may be multifaceted problems such food insecurity, illiteracy, poor sanitation, dominance of communicable diseases etc, which makes it hard to work towards early identification and prevention. Such inadequacies contribute to an infrastructure that may result in poor screening and preventive services, non-adherence to medical management guidelines, lack of available counselling, and long-distance travel to health services. More needs to be done to address the rural-urban inequality in early intervention. Given how skewed the doctor-patient ratio is in India, taking care of one's health becomes even more important. This is where preventive care becomes relevant. The last decade has seen a rising adoption of home-monitoring devices for ease and convenience as opposed to regular visits to doctors or path labs. Preventive healthcare has helped consumers in making consistent choices and taking positive action on health, diet, and lifestyle in order to stay fit. These actions not only give the body a fair shot at staying healthy but also help control existing problems at an early stage. The 2020 pandemic gave everyone an eye-opening experience towards individual health and a boom to the biomedical industries. Portable saturation probes have become a household gadget just as the glucometer. With a quick monitoring of the blood saturation, it became easier to determine whether there was an urgency for the ventilator or not for a COVID 19 patient. Such measures help to facilitate quick and rapid medical intervention. With the increasing incidence of cardiac diseases, hypertension and diabetes at a much younger age, people are grasping the need to take charge of their health and, over the last few years, have been increasingly adopting preventive monitoring as an effective tool.

This is not only because they are more health-conscious, also because the health infrastructure is lacking - the paucity of adequate medical facilities across cities is propelling the adoption of home monitoring devices. Adopting preventive care techniques like home monitoring allows patients to keep a close eye on their health and ensure that symptoms do not go out of control. By careful monitoring, healthcare providers and doctors can also take necessary measures to reduce the chances of a health catastrophe. As consumers continue to gain more awareness and access to healthcare information over the internet or via alternate mediums, the chances of increasing life expectancy will also improve. India has an unprecedented opportunity to become a healthy nation with the ability to take the right preventive steps.

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