Press Release

Increasing suicides in India are a testimony to the faulty mental health policies of the country

According to recent reports, over 50 million people suffer from mental illness like depression, suicidal ideation and anxiety in India

Over 7,000 people end up committing suicide because of lack of adequate counseling and other medical assistance

New Delhi, 4th April 2017: The Indian constitution grants us seven fundamental rights, out of which the most basic one is the ‘Right to Life’. The taboo in the society, which often exists when it comes to mental illnesses like anxiety and depression, has become a deterrent to this very basic right. The increasing number of suicide cases making the headlines has caused severe uproar in the medical fraternity and government for better facilities to mental health patients, however despite deliberations, no conclusion has come to light yet.

India is right on the top of the list in regards to the maximum cases of suicides recorded every year across Southeast Asia. The average suicide rate in India is 10.9 for every lakh people and the majority of people who commit suicide are below 44 years of age, said a World Health Organisation (WHO) report.

Suicidal ideation and behavior are among the most serious and common psychiatric emergencies. Patients at imminent risk for suicide require immediate psychiatric services and must be monitored continuously until they are in a safe situation. After a suicide attempt, psychotherapy may prevent subsequent attempts.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement said that, “Suicide cases are not only prevalent amongst the general population, teenagers, youngsters and adults alike, but they are also found to be common within the medical fraternity. Medical professionals, both students and doctors are also found to end their lives because of increased stress, depression and anxiety issues. As World Mental Health Day is...
nearing, we would like to highlight that an inadequate support system is the major cause behind the increased suicide rates in our country. The need of the hour is for the Government to focus on building comprehensive mental health counseling facilities.

On examining carefully mental health patients from across professions, it has been found that the highest rate of suicide is found amongst the medical fraternity. And further elaborating, it is the physicians, pathologists and anesthetists who take their own lives most commonly. Additionally, female doctor suicides significantly outnumber male doctor suicides.

The primary reasons being the stress and strain one has go through in order to be a doctor and carry on in the medical profession. Doctors also given the easy access to medication, often misuse this to take their own lives.

In a country with such high rates of mental health patients, it is imperative that necessary steps are taken to reduce the number of deaths. Adequate counseling services must be provided and awareness raised that it is okay to find oneself in a difficult situation but there are other ways of dealing with stress than taking ones life.

We live in the 21st century and it is essential that parents realize that they must not force their children to become a doctor before being sure of their caliber and interest. Additionally there is no harm or shame in admitting one’s state of mind and help must be sought. A healthy state of mind

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About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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