Press Release

**Depression, severe mental illness and loneliness are not heart friendly**

**New Delhi 05April, 2017:** Depression, severe mental illness and loneliness are linked to heart disease and dementia, said 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.

A 3-year study by Dr Jesse Stewart, formerly of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine found a correlation between depression and hardening of the arteries. The arteries of those who are most depressed were narrowed twice as much as those who were least depressed, in the study. Hardening of the arteries is a precursor to a heart attack or stroke.

Depression may also upset the body’s regulation of glands that release chemicals governing energy level and growth, and alter the functioning of cells responsible for blood clotting.

Hardening of the arteries leads to an overreaction of the immune system and the resulting inflammation is known to release chemicals that can cause the disease.

Quoting a British study, **Dr Aggarwal** said that severely mentally ill people are more than three times as likely to die from coronary heart disease and stroke as those not suffering from mental illness. Mental illness more than doubled the risk of dying from heart disease for people up to the age 75. The risk of dying from heart disease was even higher among those taking antipsychotic medications.

A persistent feeling of loneliness among the elderly doubles the risk of developing Alzheimer’s-like symptoms compared to those who felt connected to others.

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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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