**Press Release**

**B12 deficiency can be the underlying cause of short term memory loss**

**New Delhi, 08 April, 2017:** “If you are forgetting things often, it is recommended that you get your vitamin B12 levels checked instead of worrying that you may be suffering 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 in a joint statement.

Animal products (meat and dairy) are the only dietary source of B12 (cobalamin - Cbl) for humans. Strict vegans who do not consume any animal products are at a high risk of developing nutritional Cbl deficiency. The usual western diet contains 5 to 7 micrograms of cobalamin per day, while the minimum daily requirement is 6 to 9 micrograms per day. Total body stores of Cbl are 2 to 5 mg and one-half of this is in the liver. It takes years to develop vitamin B12 deficiency after absorption of dietary B12 ceases.

There is a link between infection with Helicobacter pylori (as seen in peptic ulcer) and low serum B12 levels. Mild and usually subclinical cobalamin deficiency can also occur in 24% of the elderly. People taking metformin, those who are obese, suffer from diabetes or polycystic ovarian disease are at a higher risk of suffering from Vitamin B12 deficiency. This can however be reversed with oral calcium supplementation. Prolonged use of omeprazole (given for acidity) can result in Cbl deficiency. Women who are only moderate vegetarians may become Cbl deficient during pregnancy and lactation. Their infants also run the risk of being Cbl deficient.

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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.

**For further information please contact:**