IMA reinforces quitting tobacco for longer life on World No Tobacco Day

_URGES DOCTORS TO FOLLOW HEALTHY PRACTICES AND SET AN EXAMPLE_

**New Delhi, 30 May 2017:** According to statistics, India is the second largest consumer of tobacco and related products. The country records over 8 to 9 lakh deaths every year due to tobacco-related diseases. A vast majority which falls prey to tobacco-related diseases and other chronic ailments. A survey by the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) India states that about 35% of teen adults over 15 years use tobacco and 33% of males and 18% of females in the adult category consume some form of smokeless tobacco.

The 31st of May every year is observed as the World No Tobacco Day and the theme this year is 'Tobacco: a threat to development.' Tobacco consumption in any form, be it cigarettes, beedi, ghutkas, pan, khaini, sheesha, or even e-cigarettes can have detrimental effects on health. This is by far the most easily available and most commonly found legal hazardous material and also heavily promoted and marketed.

Speaking about this, **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, "The most common factors cited for a rapid increase in tobacco consumption among different age groups, particularly adolescents, are peer pressure or societal norms, increase in stress, bad influence, behavioural changes, and parental and sibling addiction and depression. Tobacco contains a wide range of carcinogens which interfere with the reproductive system of both men and women, cause cardiovascular problems, cancer, and infertility, and also increase the risk of Type II diabetes. Consuming tobacco in any form also leads to genetic mutations and increases the risk of miscarriages and still birth."

Tobacco cravings or the urge to smoke can be powerful. However, it is important to remember that this urge will probably pass within few minutes whether or not a person smokes a cigarette or takes a dip of chewing tobacco. Each resistance is one step closer to quitting this deadly habit for good.

Adding further, **Dr Aggarwal**, said, "As doctors and brand ambassadors of health, we have a huge responsibility to fulfil. Though doctors also have immense work stress, this should not be a driver towards addiction to any form of tobacco. IMA's _Koi Dekh to Nahi Raha_ campaign focuses on how
doctors can set examples for their patients. Being a doctor is considered a noble profession. We preach good habits to our patients on a daily basis. Therefore, the public perception at large is that doctors and other medical professionals practice what they preach, that is, they do not smoke or drink. As a doctor or a healthcare professional, you should always ask yourself,' Koi dekh to nahi raha?' to remind yourself and ascertain that you are not drinking or smoking in the presence of your patient in a social setting. This will ultimately be for the patient’s benefit in the long run."

One can try and follow the tips given below to try and quit this deadly habit.

- Try short-acting nicotine replacement therapies such as nicotine gum, lozenges, nasal sprays, or inhalers. These can help you overcome intense cravings.
- Identify the trigger situation, which makes you smoke. Have a plan in place to avoid these or get through them alternatively.
- Chew on sugarless gum or hard candy, or munch raw carrots, celery, nuts or sunflower seeds instead of tobacco.
- Get physically active. Short bursts of physical activity such as running up and down the stairs a few times can make a tobacco craving go away.

-ENDS-

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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