Press Release

Majority of Indians are unaware of adult vaccinations

The need for vaccination does not end when one becomes an adult

New Delhi, 29 November 2017: As if the fact that the health of India’s citizens is marred by various health conditions was not enough, a recent study has indicated that about 68% of the country’s adults are unaware of adult vaccinations. While a majority of those surveyed thought that vaccinations were only for children, others felt they were healthy and did not require any vaccination. As per the IMA, the need for immunization does not end when one becomes an adult. Protection from vaccines received as a child can wear off over time, and leave a person at risk for new and different diseases.

Adult vaccines are recommended based on many factors. They can help avert and reduce the health consequences of vaccine-preventable diseases among adults. Incomplete and inadequate immunization against many communicable diseases can lead to substantial and unnecessary costs in terms of hospitalization and treatment.

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, “Just like healthy eating, physical activity, and regular check-ups, vaccines also have a very important role in keeping a person healthy, through their adult years as well. Vaccines are one of the most convenient and safest preventive care measures available. Urban lifestyle today includes unhealthy eating, untimely sleeping patterns, erratic work hours, and frequent travels. This has reduced our immunity and made us more susceptible to any disease. We stay at a different place, work at another, and then enjoy visiting a distant location. Coming across different people from different regions, we become prone to any communicable disease. Medical science advanced and there are new, improved facilities and treatments available for many health conditions. During our childhood, there were many diseases without vaccines. Those vaccines are possible now.”

The Indian government has been taking steps towards adult immunization. In 1985, a universal immunization programme was launched across the country to combat Tuberculosis, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Polio, and measles.
Adding further, Dr. Aggarwal, said, “All adults over 50 years need to maintain protection against conditions such as seasonal influenza (Flu); pneumococcal disease (pneumonia, sepsis, meningitis); Hepatitis B infection (for adults who have diabetes or are at risk for hepatitis B); tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (for all adults who have not previously received this); and shingles (for adults 60 years and older).”

Following are some quick facts about adult immunization.

- Immunization saves 3 million lives every year
- Except drinking water, no other human undertaking can equal the impact immunization has had in reducing infectious diseases mortality -- not even antibiotics
- Immunization reduces mortality, morbidity, reduces direct and indirect medical costs
- Flu vaccine has led to a 70% decline in hospitalizations
- Hepatitis B vaccines have caused a drop in the incidence of liver cancer

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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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