About 1.8 million Indians suffer from stroke every year

On World Stroke Day, it is important to create awareness on the fact that timely detection and treatment can prevent permanent disability

New Delhi, 28 October 2017: The second most common cause of death globally, next to coronary artery disease, stroke is also the most prevalent cause of chronic adult disability, reveal statistics. India accounts for more than four-fifths of all strokes with about 1.8 million Indians suffering from this condition every year. The IMA opines that stroke is not just limited to the elderly and increasingly, young Indians below 40 years of age are becoming susceptible to this condition primarily due to lifestyle factors.

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of your brain is interrupted or severely reduced, depriving brain tissue of oxygen and nutrients. Within minutes, brain cells begin to die. It is imperative to detect a stroke early, as with every second that the disease goes untreated, about 32,000 brain cells are damaged.

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, ‘Time is brain’. A patient with suspected stroke or ‘brain attack’ should therefore be shifted to hospital at the earliest and given a clot dissolving therapy. A stroke may result from a blocked artery (ischemic stroke) or the leaking or bursting of a blood vessel (hemorrhagic stroke). In others, there could be a temporary disruption of blood flow to the brain (transient ischemic attack, or TIA).About 85% of strokes are ischemic in nature. Some common risk factors for stroke in the country include hypertension, diabetes, smoking, and dyslipidemia. These are further insufficiently controlled due to low awareness levels about the disease. Another major challenge in this direction is that treatment for stroke is still evolving in our country.”

The acronym FAST can be used to recognize the warning signs of stroke: face drooping, arm weakness, speech difficulty, and time to emergency. The disabilities caused due to a stroke can be temporary or permanent, depending on how long the brain lacks blood flow and which part is affected.
Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “Stroke is an emergency and getting timely help and treatment is extremely important. Hence, it is very important to act fast to identify these patients. Early treatment improves the chances of recovery. While one cannot control factors such as race, gender, and genetic predisposition, it is possible to make certain lifestyle changes which will go a long way in reducing a person’s chances of getting a stroke at a young age.”

Some tips to prevent a stroke include the following.

- Lower your blood pressure levels as a high BP is one of the leading causes for a stroke.
- Losing weight can help prevent other associated complications.
- Indulge in about 30 minutes of physical activity every day.
- Quit smoking and drink in moderation if you must.
- Keep your blood sugar levels under control.
- Reduce stress through activities such as meditation and yoga.

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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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