Press Release

Preventable illness and mortality due to air, water and soil contamination is unacceptable: IMA

Each year, about 13 million of all deaths worldwide result from preventable environmental causes.

New Delhi, Jan 15, 2017: Environmental risk determinants, such as air, water and soil pollution, chemical and insecticide exposures and global climate change contribute to more than 100 different diseases and injuries. More than a quarter of the mortality in India can be attributed to living in an unhealthy environment. The largest burden is that of air pollution, which kills about 1.4 million people in India every year. The other major causes of preventable mortality are poor water quality and sanitation.

IMA is for preventing these avoidable illnesses and mortalities through strategic planning, awareness campaigns and mutual collaboration with concerned authorities.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr KK 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, “Sixty percent of deaths occurring in our country are preventable. A healthy environment is a pre-requisite to a healthy population. Using clean technologies and fuel for cooking, lighting and heating can significantly reduce air contamination, which will ultimately lead to a decline in acute respiratory infections, chronic respiratory diseases and heart diseases. Providing clean water, especially to rural areas, is also imperative as poor water quality is the top most cause of diarrhea-related mortality in children under five and about 37.7 million Indians are affected by waterborne diseases annually. More than 60 million people across 20 states of India are exposed to fluoride contamination. Increasing soil contamination by widespread pesticide use is also leading to ever increasing risks of cancer, colorectal disorders and foodborne diseases.”

The WHO report on ‘Preventing Disease through Healthy Environments’ states that about 1 in 4 deaths globally is due to environmental factors like poor air, water and soil quality. The problem is more severe in developing nations like India, which lags only behind China in terms of air quality index.

“The link between environment and health is a very tangible one, and the grim situation calls for an urgent need for investing in strategies and planning to reduce environmental risks in our cities,
homes and workplaces. Organisations and government bodies need to join hands and address this cause on a national platform. The first step would be to strengthen national environmental health policy, strategy and infrastructure”, added Dr Aggarwal.

The concept of “One Health” by IMA strives for the integrative effort of multiple disciplines aiming towards optimal health for people, animals and the environment.

Sources

- [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3461729/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3461729/)
- [http://cseindia.org/content/cse’s-inaugural-state-india’s-health-report-connects-most-environmental-factors-some-gravest](http://cseindia.org/content/cse’s-inaugural-state-india’s-health-report-connects-most-environmental-factors-some-gravest)

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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 29 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 53,000 doctors as its members through more than 1650 active local branches spread across the country.

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