The health hazards associated with air pollution

**New Delhi, November 14, 2016:** Air pollution is linked to increased rates of morbidity and mortality, in particular from cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses. Environmental pollution, especially with high particulate matter PM 2.5 exposure, has also been proved to be linked with an increased prevalence of diabetes.

Research indicates that a decrease in the concentration of the fine particulate pollution (PM$_{2.5}$) by 10 micrograms per cubic meter is associated with an increased life expectancy of 0.77 year and 15 percent of the overall increase in life expectancy.

Speaking about this, Padma Shri awardee, Dr. K.K Aggarwal- President HCFI and National President Elect IMA. said, “A recent study showed an increased risk of heart attack associated with short-term exposure to a variety of air pollutants (carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide); the population attributable risk was estimated as 0.6 to 4.5 percent. With the population levels in Delhi at an all time high, it is imperative that awareness is raised about the health hazards of high air pollution levels and necessary steps each one of us must take to stay healthy. People at high risk include those with existing lifestyle diseases, children and the elderly. This group must not stay in densely polluted areas for a long period of time, wear masks and should avoid engaging in strenuous outdoor activities. It is the duty of each and every citizen to work towards reducing the environmental burden of our country.”

Air pollution is also associated with adverse effects on lung development and decreased lung function in children. In children with and without asthma, improvements in air quality (decreased levels of nitrogen dioxide and particular matter) is associated with improvements in both forced expiratory volume in 1 second and forced vital capacity between age 11 and 15. There is a known correlation between levels of air pollution and lung disease, but the association between air pollution and asthma is less clear.

Asthma is related to specific pollutants, while other respiratory diseases are related to total air pollution.

- The prevalence rates of asthma and atopy are linked with NO2 levels and CO levels. Particulate matter and ozone levels may have no link
- The prevalence rates of bronchitis are linked to SO2

Pollution has various hazardous effects on a person’s health. It precipitates asthma, heart attacks and COPD. Pollution is linked to the build up of carbon dioxide leading to global warming, climatic changes, and a multitude of adverse human health outcomes. Release of chlorofluorocarbon gases used in refrigerators destroys the protective ozone layer in the stratosphere, thereby leading to an increase in ultraviolet radiation and skin cancers, particularly
melanoma. The time has come for each one of us to make an effort to reduce the environmental burden caused by our day-to-day actions. The future of our civilization lies in each one of our hands.

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About Heart Care Foundation of India

Initiated in 1986, the Heart Care Foundation of India is a leading National NGO working in the field of creating mass health awareness among people from all walks of life and providing solutions for India's everyday healthcare needs. The NGO uses consumer-based entertainment modules to impart health education and increase awareness amongst people. A leading example of this is the Perfect Health Mela; an annual event started in 1993 that is attended by over 2-3 lakh people each year. The Mela showcases activities across categories such as health education seminars and check-ups, entertainment programs, lifestyle exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and competitions. In addition to this, the NGO conducts programs and camps to train people on the technique of hands only CPR through its CPR 10 mantra for revival after a sudden cardiac arrest. They currently hold three Limca book of world records for the maximum number of people trained in hands-only CPR in one go. Keeping article 21 of the Indian Constitution in mind, which guarantees a person Right to Life, Heart Care Foundation of India has also recently initiated a project called the Sameer Malik Heart Care Foundation Fund to ensure that no one dies of a heart disease just because they cannot afford treatment.

For more information, please contact

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