What is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and how does it affect your lungs?

As per the WHO reports, more than 65 million people are suffering from moderate to severe COPD in India.

India’s population accounts for a significant percentage of COPD mortality, which is estimated to be amongst the highest in the world, coming down to about 556,000 in case of India (>20%) out of a world total of 2,748,000 annually.

New Delhi, 19th November 2016: COPD or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease has been characterized as one of the most common lung disorders. Individuals suffering from COPD develop chronic bronchitis, which causes them to develop a persisting cough with mucus. Additionally, they may suffer from emphysema, which stimulates lung issues in an individual over time. In this disease, a person suffers from a restricted flow of air to the lungs causing them to develop one or both the diseases.

Coming to the causes, smoking has been talked about as one of the most prominent causes for the development of COPD among the population. It is because more than a third of the population in India consumes tobacco products and other variety of alternatives. While cigarettes and chewable tobacco products are common in urban areas, the rural population smokes conventional tobacco alternatives like bidi, hookah, and chillum. COPD is prevalent among individuals who don’t smoke or consume tobacco products as well. In such cases, the lack of a protein called alpha-1 antitrypsin can stimulate emphysema. Apart from this, factors like excessive exposure to gasses that harm the lungs, air pollution affecting the quality of breath and lack of proper ventilation can worsen the health of lungs.

People with existing COPD disease are considered to be at an increased risk of developing morbidities like cardiovascular issues, lung cancer and a variety of other medical anomalies.

Stressing on the issue, Padma Shri Awardee Dr. KK Aggarwal - President HCFI and National President Elect IMA said, “There is little awareness about the fact COPD is treatable, and an individual can be relieved of the disease once the disease has been identified and the necessary precautionary measures have been taken. We recommend individuals to start up an alternative regime that entails fixing lifestyle irregularities. The first and most important way to slow lung damage is to quit smoking. In addition to this it is also recommended that a regular exercise routine is put in motion to help build one’s strength and stamina. It is essential to keep your surroundings clean and ensure proper ventilation. Fireplaces and areas where there is excessive pollution should be avoided since they can aggravate respiratory issues. And lastly, eat healthy so that you can live disease free,”

Individuals suffering from the disease are prescribed inhalers to open the airways so that the air can thoroughly pass; oral medicines are prescribed to decrease lung inflammation reduce swelling and control infection in the lungs. In severe circumstances, injective medicines, using a nebulizer, oxygen therapy, and breathing assistance through a mask or endotracheal tube is preferred. Medical assistance is available to decrease the severity of the disease, but nothing can compare to the precautions and individual takes like saying no to smoking.
A person suffering from COPD might notice symptoms like:

- Short of breath or complete breathlessness
- Chest congestion
- Wheezing
- Coughing Mucus
- Excessively scratchy throat
- Presence of sputum
- Recurring moderate to severe respiratory infections
- Blue tinge in the fingernails and lips
- Feeling lethargy
- Abrupt weight loss

Prevention is always better than cure and this COPD Day IMA will be educating all its 2.5 lakh members on the proper patient counseling techniques in this regard.

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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.

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Heart Care Foundation of India

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