Timely action is of key essence while dealing with patients who have suffered a heart attack, sudden cardiac arrest or stroke

New Delhi, 06th October 2016: In India, around a third of the population suffers from degenerative diseases like ischemic heart issues, chronic obstructive pulmonary problems and stroke. These diseases also known as the leading killers were also accountable for 30 percent of all deaths in 2013. Stroke and heart disease are leading causes of death and disability in India. The estimated prevalence rate of stroke in the country ranges from 84-262 per 100,000 population in rural and 334-424 per 100,000 populations in urban areas. Approximately 40% of patients with stroke succumb to their illness.

Both heart attack and stroke are caused by interruptions in the normal flow of blood to the heart or brain, the organs that are the most essential to life. This happens when the cells present in the heart and brain don't get enough access to the oxygen-rich blood and other nutrients. In such a case, these heart and brain cells begin to malfunction and die. This cell death can set off a series of harmful effects throughout the body resulting in familiar symptoms of a heart or brain emergency. However, one must remember is that heart attacks and strokes are not the same. While one affects the heart, the other damages the brain.

Speaking about the issue, Padma Shree Awardee Dr KK Aggarwal, President Heart Care Foundation of India and President Elect IMA said, “Stroke-like heart disease is a lifestyle induced ailment aggravated due to obesity, physical inactivity, regular heavy or binge drinking, smoking, hypertension, high cholesterol levels, diabetes, sleep apnea, family history and heart disease. Timely recognition of symptoms and seeking emergency help is key to saving lives. Just like in sudden cardiac arrest deaths every minute lost in performing hands-only CPR decreases the chances of a person's revival by 10%, every minute lost in getting medical attention increases chances of death and disability. India is facing a stroke and heart disease epidemic, and we must work towards amending our high-stress lifestyle to reverse this trend and save lives.”

The most common symptoms of heart attack include crushing chest pain and difficulty breathing. A heart attack might also cause cold sweats, racing heart, pain in the left arm, jaw stiffness, or shoulder pain. Additionally, many don't know that women often have different heart attack symptoms than men. For instance, instead of having chest pain during a heart attack, women may feel exhausted and fatigued or have indigestion and nausea.
The symptoms of stroke include sudden difficulty seeing, speaking, or walking, and feelings of weakness, numbness, dizziness, and confusion. Some people get a severe headache that’s immediate and strong, different from any kind they’ve ever had.

It is important to differentiate the conditions and seek immediate help when faced with such situations. One should never neglect the even the smallest symptoms. In the case of stroke, the F.A.S.T technique should be used to detect the conditions and save lives.

- **Face Drooping** – Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person’s smile uneven?
- **Arm Weakness** – Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- **Speech Difficulty** – Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence, like "The sky is blue." Is the sentence repeated correctly?
- If the answers to these questions are yes, then it is **Time to call your doctor** immediately.

Lifestyle changes are also a must. People often remain unaware of the consequences of their choices on their health. The risk of a stroke and heart disease in a smoker is double when compared to a non-smoker. Smoking increases clot formation, thickens the blood, and increases the amount of plaque build-up in the arteries of both the heart and brain. In addition to this, obesity puts a strain on the entire circulatory system. It can also make people more likely to have high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes, all of which can increase stroke and heart disease risk. Alcohol use is also very dangerous. A healthy diet comprising of fruits, vegetables, and low trans fats is a must for the prevention of lifestyle diseases.

- Ends -

**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

Heart Care Foundation of India
Sanjeev Khanna-9871079105
Md Adib Ahmed- 9873716235
Email- media.hcfi@gmail.com