

Removing Diabetic Capital ignominy needs collective efforts

04 December 2018 | Features | By Manbeena Chawla

People suffering from diabetes need dedicated follow-up care plan and lifestyle management.



Diabetes is today among the most prevalent of the 'lifestyle diseases' plaguing the country today, and with all strata experiencing a rise in their living standards. Diabetes has also become one of the fastest-growing diseases in its prevalence in India.

The latest *Lancet* study, Type 2 Diabetes in South Asia, states that there has been an increase in the prevalence of type 2 diabetes and related risk factors in India. There are about 98 million people in India who may have the type 2 diabetes by 2030. It further states that there has been a decline in the quality of nutrition, coupled with reduced physical activity, and an increase in sedentary behaviour observed among Indians.

These statistics clearly indicate that India is witnessing rapid demographic changes which will soon result in a deluge of lifestyle disorders (cardiovascular disorder, diabetes and cancer, etc.) reaching epidemic proportions.

Challenges in diabetes management

Given the prevalence of diabetes, an important debate occurs around the crucial role being played by healthcare companies providing diabetes' treatment and management, mainly the ones dealing with 'outpatient care'. Considering the huge population, there is a shortage of skilled healthcare professionals to manage the existing disease burden, thus creating a gap between appropriate monitoring and routine follow-ups.

Moreover, healthcare providers have so far mainly focussed on acute management rather than preventive care or treating the factors that contributed to onset of an illness. The intensive treatment of the disease throughout one's life calls for the high spend. While the awareness and understanding of diabetes is inadequate among the average citizen, which delays the diagnosis and recognition of complications, we need to streamline effective strategies to tackle these problems.

Need For Follow-up Care Services -- Stopping a looming crisis

People suffering from diabetes need dedicated follow-up care plan and lifestyle management. To address this concern, hospitals require a concrete multi-disciplinary approach like an external follow-up care service to dwell deeper into diabetes care. This will enhance patient care and improve patient satisfaction with better doctor-patient relationship and increase the patient's quality of life.

Furthermore, there has been a rising demand for elderly care with rapid urbanization and emerging trend of nuclear families. The elderly population is left alone after their children leave home for professional pursuits, thus facilities like healthcare services at home and follow-up care helps them in self-management and has a huge scope of growth in India.

From an economic point of view, in follow-up services, the adherence to treatment guidelines could be interesting as it could prevent hospital readmissions related to complications and reduce the high substantial costs attached to it, also a proper management program ensures higher quality of life along with increased longevity/Life expectancy.

Coalise efforts for better Diabetes Management

The hospitals and follow-up care providers need to come together to provide proper and early diagnosis and a planned routine care for patients to monitor their day-to-day progress.

As diabetes is linked to several other conditions, such as (cardio-Vascular diseases – CVD) heart diseases and strokes, Retinopathy & etc., one needs to keep a check on the disease. This could be done through understanding and enriching the concept of disease management in the healthcare system. There is a need for more health educators to counsel and educate patients about their condition.

With rapid development in medicine and healthcare industry, there is a positive shift in the healthcare industry. From a doctor-centric treatment to patient-preferred healthcare, technology is creating a positive impact on the ability to manage lifestyle diseases and personal health. We are now quite familiar with the concept of personalized medicines in diabetes and for other ailments as well. Personalized medicines will help in identifying and addressing barriers in the selection of appropriate treatment that would further improve the care-giving process.

Conclusion

Over the years, diabetes has become an epidemic in India and now the main aim should be to concentrate more on the preventive measures and early diagnosis by educating people about the disease and its management. Healthcare, along with technology, gives healthcare industry and healthcare providers the ability to simplify processes and offer personalized care with greater efficiency. The adoption of patient-centric approach, coupled with technology, is expected to change the face of the industry by making healthcare services efficient and more accessible.

Dr. Jagadeesh, Consultant-Diabetologist, Eldricare