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ICMR releases estimates on burden due to mental disorders

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The contribution of mental disorders to the total disease burden has doubled between 1990 and 2017



The first comprehensive estimates of disease burden due to mental disorders and their trends in every state of India from 1990 published in The Lancet Psychiatry by the India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative show that a significant proportion of India's population faces the burden of mental disorders of varying severity.

These include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, idiopathic developmental intellectual disability, conduct disorders, and autism. In 2017, 197 million Indians were suffering from mental disorders of whom 46 million had depression and 45 million anxiety disorders. The contribution of mental disorders to the total disease burden has doubled between 1990 and 2017.

At the release of the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) India Mental Disorders paper at ICMR, Prof Balram Bhargava, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Health Research and Director General, ICMR said, "The findings of this research demonstrate important differences between the states—the prevalence of adult mental disorders is higher in the southern states and that of childhood onset mental disorders is higher in the northern states of India. The insights provided by this study are important for titrating strategies for mental health improvement in each state. Given the significant contribution of mental disorders to the disease burden in India, further research should continue to track the changing trends of mental disorders in different parts of the country."

Key findings from the paper:

- In 2017, 197.3 million Indians (14.3% of the total population) were suffering from various mental disorders. Of these, 45.7 million had depression and 44.9 million had anxiety disorders.
- The contribution of mental disorders to the total disease burden in India in terms of DALYs increased from 2.5% in 1990 to 4.7% in 2017.
- Mental disorders were the leading contributor in India to years lived with disability (YLDs), contributing 14.5% of all YLDs in 2017.
- Depression contributed 33.8% of all mental disorder DALYs in India in 2017, followed by anxiety disorders (19.0%), idiopathic developmental intellectual disability (10.8%), and schizophrenia (9.8%).
- Among the major mental disorders that manifest predominantly during adulthood, the prevalence of depression was 3.3%, anxiety disorders 3.3%, bipolar disorder 0.55%, and schizophrenia 0.25%.
- Among the mental disorders that have onset predominantly during childhood and adolescence, the prevalence for idiopathic developmental intellectual disability was 4.5%, conduct disorder 0.80%, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder 0.42%, and autism spectrum disorders 0.35%.
- The prevalence of predominantly childhood and adolescent onset mental disorders was higher in the less developed northern states, and that of the ICMR/ PR UNIT/IIFO/2019/50 mental disorders manifesting predominantly during adulthood higher in the more developed southern states.
- There was a significant association between the prevalence of depression and suicide death rate at the state level, with this association slightly stronger in females than in males.
- The prevalence of depression, anxiety disorders, and eating disorders was significantly higher among females, and the prevalence of conduct disorder, autism spectrum disorders, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder was significantly higher among boys.
- The prevalence of depressive disorders increased with age in India in 2017, with the highest prevalence in elderly.
- The burden of mental disorders which manifest predominantly during adulthood increased in India from 1990 to 2017.
- The burden of mental disorders of predominantly childhood and adolescent onset decreased in India from 1990 to 2017, but this decrease was relatively less in the less developed states.