

Heart disease marginally increases compared to pre-COVID

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Patients with cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, are more likely to face complications and death due to coronavirus



With the COVID 19 outbreak negatively impacting healthcare access and mobility, the pandemic is exacerbating the already high burden of cardiovascular diseases in India.

Doctors and healthcare experts are concerned that delayed diagnosis and interruptions in treatment are resulting in many preventable deaths and the worsening prognosis for patients.

As we observe World Heart Day on 29 September, healthcare experts underline the need for ensuring continuity of treatment for heart patients and resorting to better lifestyle management to prevent disease-related complications.

Doctors say that acute and chronic cardiovascular disease care has decreased significantly due to reduced accessibility and patient fears during the pandemic.

“Heart disease has marginally increased by 10 to 20% compared to pre-Covid. But patients are not coming forward due to scare except in an emergency. So there is 25% decline in the number of patients reporting on time in Hospitals. More and more younger adults are getting symptomatic also. Evidently, people are postponing hospital visits until it is absolutely unavoidable. Disruptions in travel and transport have further prevented many people from smaller towns and rural areas from reaching hospitals for treatment. While there is no data or analysis to understand what is happening to these patients, it is clear that many of them have not been able to receive medical care and treatment on time. In a nutshell, patients with cardiovascular diseases, hypertension and diabetes etc are experiencing delays in diagnosis and treatment, which in turn will significantly increase the burden of heart disease and preventable deaths,” said Dr. D K Jhamb, Director & HOD, Cardiology, Paras Hospitals, Gurugram.

There are an estimated currently 79 million diabetes patients in India while another 200 million are hypertensive. Interruptions in diagnosis, treatment and regular check-ups for these patients can further translate into a higher cardiovascular disease burden. Delaying or interrupting chronic disease treatment may cause permanent health damage and preventable deaths. This burden will easily exceed the impact of COVID 19 impact in terms of deaths.