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Awareness and innovation key to effective diabetes management

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Adopting a multidimensional approach focusing on long-term holistic wellness can help patients live healthy lives



Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) have turned out to be one of the most formidable public health concerns in India. A recent survey by ASSOCHAM recognised diabetes, hypertension, and digestive disease as the top three NCDs in the country followed by heart diseases, respiratory diseases and neurological disorders, among others. The report also pointed out that over two-thirds of individuals suffering from NCDs were in the age group of 26 – 59 years, thus highlighting the growing prevalence of these diseases in the younger population. One of the major non-communicable diseases rampant in India is diabetes.

When it comes to diabetes, India is home to 77 million diabetics, thus earning the title of diabetes capital of the world. The widespread occurrence of this disease can be attributed to living conditions including a person's diet, lack of physical activity, high blood pressure and increase in body weight. In fact, a 2019 survey by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare reported that the prevalence of diabetes was 11.8 per cent in the country, with the rate of prevalence estimated to be even higher in urban areas.

Need for awareness around diabetes management strategies

Despite the condition's widespread prevalence, there are still several myths associated with diabetes. For instance, some people believe diabetes isn't a serious enough condition as they are unaware of the complications which can occur if the disease isn't managed correctly. Additionally, some patients avoid prescribed diabetes medication due to a fear of side effects. These factors can affect how patients choose to manage the condition, leading to an increased risk of complications and adverse events. Hence, it is imperative that patients recognise the significance of a holistic approach to managing the disease.
It is essential for patients to understand that the journey of diabetes management is a long-term one and can help them avoid the risk of a multitude of complications. A holistic diabetes management strategy covers multiple aspects such as prescribed medication, a nutritious diet and a healthy, active lifestyle. Such a regime can help patients control their blood sugar, thus reducing the likelihood of risk factors such as heart disease, brain stroke and kidney failure.

Leveraging innovation for effective diabetes management

Over the last few decades, type 2 diabetes-related breakthroughs have led to significant advancement in how the condition can be managed. Drugs today offer a much more targeted effect for specific diabetes-related issues. For instance, oral medications such as sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 (SGLT2) inhibitors help lower blood sugar levels by preventing the kidneys from absorbing glucose. Even technological devices are helping patients to monitor and manage their condition well. Continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) – devices that monitor blood glucose levels consistently throughout the day without requiring a drop of blood – can help people with diabetes identify trends and patterns related to their blood glucose levels. This data can then be used by doctors to alter the patient's diabetes management plan.

To enable good diabetes care, reducing the risk of complications, sustaining a healthy lifestyle, taking prescribed medicines, and ensuring regular health check-ups will be critical. Additionally, adopting a nutritious diet, frequently exercising, or going for walks, and ensuring low-stress levels and overall mental wellbeing can help patients improve overall health outcomes. Adopting these measures is not complex, however, sustaining these practices over the long-term calls for continuous dedication and commitment. Thus, adopting a multidimensional approach focusing on long-term holistic wellness can help patients live healthy lives.

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