

WHO calls for an end to diabetes

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The Regional Director for South-East Asia, Dr Poonam Khetrapal in her message on November 14, 2015 talked about the importance of eliminating diabetes. She mentioned, "Diabetes is a global epidemic which kills one person every six seconds and over 5 million every year. Diabetes makes people prone to heart disease, kidney failure and infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV/AIDS, among others, leading to premature deaths. The diabetes epidemic is growing in many countries. The number of people with diabetes is projected to increase alarmingly from 457 million in 2014 to 592 million by 2035, if we do not act now to arrest this trend."

Diabetes can be prevented and treated. World Diabetes Day, created in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation and WHO is focusing on "Healthy Living and Diabetes" as the theme for 2014 to 2016, and the importance of prevention in diabetes. To put the spotlight on the urgent need to act against diabetes, World Health Organization has selected diabetes, as the theme for the World Health Day 2016.

WHO South-East Asia Region is home to an estimated 91 million people affected by diabetes. Approximately half of them go undiagnosed. WHO is supporting countries by advocating for and catalyzing multisectoral policies for health promotion and strengthening national health systems for early detection and treatment of diabetes. These include training health workforce, developing treatment norms and increasing the availability of basic diagnostics and essential medicines at primary health care centers.

"We need to work collaboratively with governments, civil society, private sectors, schools, workplaces, media and other local partners. We all have a role to play to ensure healthier environment for a healthy living. However, the key role is of an individual to make lifelong healthy choices for a healthier future," said Dr Khetrapal.

Taking small steps like eating right, regular physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight can cut the risk of diabetes or delay its onset