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Spike in obesity-induced hypertension cases

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PUNE: High prevalence of obesity and diabetes can be blamed for the rise of hypertension cases in Pune, according to the city's health abnormality report which is based on a study conducted by a Pune-based preventive healthcare organisation for the year 2012-13 and 2013-14.

As per the study, obesity-induced hypertension cases are now being seen in the age group of 35-45 years. High intakes of fried food and a sedentary lifestyle coupled with less physical activity are causing obesity, leading to high blood pressure, experts said.

The report analysed health conditions of 16,145 people, including 9,817 males and 6,328 females, in 2012-13, and 23,145 people (13,917 males and 9,228 females) in 2013-14. The results showed that 28% of men and 22% of women in the group were diagnosed with hypertension as compared to last year (2012-13), when 19% men and 17% women were diagnosed with the condition.

"The main reason for hypertension due to obesity has been clearly noticed in the age bracket of 35-45 years as compared to last year, wherein the age bracket was between 45 and 50 years. High intake of fried food and less fruit consumption is increasing obesity. Uncontrolled sugar level amongst those in the middle aged group has also increased the risk of diabetes which is causing hypertension," said preventive healthcare expert Amol Naikawadi of Indus Health Plus who carried out the study.

Reiterating Naikawadi's view, physician Shailendra Date of Sahyadri Hospital said: "The youngsters suffer because of the heavy stress levels, lifestyle change, obesity, smoking, alcohol, presence of diabetes and the same causes are liable to the middle age group. It has also found that there are huge chances of hypertension if there is a family history of high blood pressure. Whereas senior citizens are prone to hypertension due to age related increasing stiffness of blood vessels." If complications are not controlled then it can lead to various other threats like heart attack, he added.

The rising cases of hypertension in the age group of 25-45 years are alarming. However, a healthy regime can easily help in curbing them. "Stress can't be avoided due to the kind of busy schedule one has coupled with added responsibilities. However, hypertension can be kept at bay with regular exercise, meditation, yoga and healthy diet," Date said.

The biggest threat about high blood pressure is that it does not have a specific symptom that verifies hypertension. It gets detected incidentally when the person gets affected through a cause. Therefore, it is advisable to have a blood pressure check-up at least thrice a year, doctors said.

Males are definitely affected in higher number as compared to females due to the hormonal protection inherited in females. "People often tend to ignore symptoms such as headaches and anxiety. While one keeps a watch on such symptoms, it is advised to monitor blood pressure quarterly above the age of 35. Below the age of 35 one should monitor it every 6 months. But, if one is already a blood pressure patient then it is mandatory to go for monthly check up," Naikawadi said.

World Hypertension Day was observed on May 17. This year the theme was 'Know Your BP'.

Key findings of the report

The driving risk for hypertension due to obesity has been clearly noticed in the age group of 35-45 years as compared to last year's age bracket of 45-50 years

Uncontrolled sugar level amongst those in middle aged group in the city has increased the risk of diabetes which is causing hypertension

Obesity and diabetes prevalence stays high in Puneites, especially amongst working professionals in age group of 35-45 years

The younger generations in their late 20s are more prone to diabetes because of their fast pace life and high stress levels. This has increased the number of hypertension in Pune city amongst youngsters

Prevalence of hypertension in urban Pune is 20-40 % while in rural areas it is around 12-17% and the prevalence of pre-hypertension is as high as 60-70%

About 35-40 % of youngsters and middle aged who also lack physical activity and restlessness have been diagnosed with hypertension

Hypertension is more prevalent in upper middle class as compared to middle class and other strata of the society

Men and women in the age group of 30-45 years smoke heavily and this has increased the numbers too

(Source: Indus Health Plus, Pune)