

PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE: AN ANSWER TO A BUNCH OF PROBLEMS

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India as a country has several hundred thousands of people having lifestyle health problems such as high cholesterol, Diabetes and high blood pressure. On such scenario, preventive healthcare could become an answer to this challenge.

In an exclusive interaction with *Faiz Askari, Editor of SMESTREET*, **Amol Naikawadi, Joint Managing Director, Indus Health Plus** shared an overview of the Indian preventive healthcare sector.

Naikawadi also shares an overview of challenges and opportunities ahead of this sector and future plans of Indus Health Plus.

The edited excerpts:

There are some basic preventive measures that one can undertake to curb the malady of Diabetes. How preventive diagnosis can reduce nation's economic burden?

The best and easiest way to prevent diabetes is to get regular preventive health checkups done. We at Indus Health Plus offer various packages which will screen the person for developing illnesses.

In India, about 65 million people suffer from diabetes, and this figure is likely to go upto 109 by 2035. India contributes to 17% Global Diabetes Burden. At least 1 million people died in 2013 because of diabetes. The economic burden due to diabetes in India is among the highest in the world. In India around 10% of our population suffers from Diabetes. For each 1 diagnosed diabetic there is around 4 to 5 undiagnosed Diabetic or pre diabetic. Diabetes treatment accounts for around 2.1% of the total GDP, out of which only 0.2% is direct healthcare cost, while the indirect cost is almost 10 fold higher (1.9% of the GDP).

This economic gimix can be curbed when people go for a regular preventive health checkup for early detection and with this follow a healthy lifestyle that avoids lifestyle diseases. This would not only reduce the economic burden on the country but the economic burden faced by every family too would fall down drastically.

Please share the status of preventive healthcare sector in India. What are the needs of this sector in India?

The growth of a nation is not just about tallying its industrial, agricultural and services balance sheets. It is equally about tallying its performance on the human development indices. The state of its healthcare is one of the critical measures of how a nation state is performing. For a country the size of India, that is even more important. The Indian healthcare industry is all set to grow to over USD 280 billion by 2020, which is a growth of over ten times from 2005. This growth has been driven by several factors, including demographics, increase in awareness levels and availability of medical care in India.

How is this scenario in India is changing? What are the key trends you witnessed in the area of preventive healthcare sector?

Rising affordability preventive healthcare is becoming a key driver in the market. In the past decade, India has witnessed a rapid increase in levels of wealth and disposable incomes. Coupled with a better standard of living and health awareness, this has led to an increase in spending on healthcare and wellness.

Secondly, lifestyle-related diseases comprised 13% of total ailments in India, according to a 2008 data, and this number is expected to increase to 20 percent by 2018. This has also become a factor of preventive healthcare penetration. This is expected to trigger an additional demand for specialized treatment, which in turn, will lead to increased margins for hospitals since these diseases lie at the high margin end of the spectrum.

What are the key challenges that this sector is facing?

Despite such strong factors working in the industry's favor, there are several systemic challenges that also need to be addressed.

There is a factor of dual disease burden, which acts as a challenge for the patients. Even as the incidence of lifestyle diseases is steadily on the rise, a vast majority of rural and poor patients still suffer from infectious and acute diseases.

Please share some glimpse about Indus Health Plus and what are your plans for expansion?

Indus Health Plus (P) Ltd. was incorporated in 2000 as first of its kind in the preventive healthcare sector. An ISO 9001:2008 certified company; Indus Health Plus is determined to live up to its motto of making quality healthcare 'Available, Accessible and Affordable' each and every day. Indus has 90 delivery partners across 40 cities today. With an outreach to 80 lakh people (approx.), Indus has reached to more than 4.75 lakh people who have availed the preventive health check-up across the country. Indus was the first in the preventive healthcare category to popularize the use of CT scanning technology across a wider demography. Up to 70% of the check-ups depend upon the above mentioned technology, which detects the presence of lifestyle diseases like cardiovascular diseases in a non-invasive manner. Today it has Successful tie-ups with state of the art hospitals, corporate and charitable trusts to ensure the best of healthcare facilities for our clients in both preventive and curative measures, across the country. Strong and integrated back-end processes, "Live Doctor Chat" etc. are its add-on features.

We facilitate preventive health check-ups at state of the art hospitals and diagnostic centres, but at extremely affordable rates, meant for the common man. At present we have four packages which include an exhaustive list of laboratory tests as well high-end imaging to detect the presence of lifestyle diseases.

What are the key qualities that distinguishes Indus health plus from others?

- ▶ Comprehensive check-up using high-end state of the art technology
- ▶ We facilitate everything under a single roof, and provide the check-up report along with doctor's consultation on the same day of the check-up.
- ▶ Each delivery partner (hospital/diagnostic centre) has an Indus team placed exclusively to handhold clients through the entire procedure and gives them a gratifying experience.
- ▶ A 100 seater in-house call centre to provide live support to the clients.

Apart from making affordable and quality health checkups available to all, Indus Health Plus focuses on making the experience of visiting a health centre friendly to all. Looking at the busy lifestyle people have nowadays, all you have to do is to give us a call and we will do everything to make sure that your parents and family members feel at home. My staff makes sure that old people do not feel lost in the chaos, guide them and treat them like their own parents. We want to make the experience of visiting a hospital a great one rather than dread it.

What are the priority action plans for Indus Health Plus for next one years?

Mission of Indus Health Plus is to make quality healthcare Available, Accessible and Affordable' to

masses every day. We want to educate people on benefits timely check – up which not only saves life of a person it also saves their families from mental and physical trauma and financial distress.

Indus aims to achieve pan-India presence by concentrating on multiple location availability of their services for their clientele. Indus Health Plus is expanding its wings in Mangalore, Trivandrum and Kochi in south India. We are also looking at a mix of Tier-II and in some cases Tier-III cities as we aim to achieve pan-India presence and make Indus Health Plus, a name synonymous to preventive healthcare all over. Seeing the current success, we wish to consolidate our national presence in the coming years by spreading ourselves in the eastern and north eastern regions. In the process of facilitating the check-ups to the number mentioned above, we reached about 4.75 lakh people. In the next 3-5 years we have a modest ambition of facilitating the screening program to around many more with times to come, thereby reaching out on a macro level. With a focus on the high end preventive health checkups, we are always trying to adopt new technologies for early detection mechanism. We are focusing on a geographical expansion in stages with a vision to service not just Tier II and Tier III cities but other smaller towns as well. With the edge in preventive health care that we are embarking on, even international bodies have started recognizing us and in times to come we look forward to extend our services in the international market also.