

Many elderly Indians are ill & not aware of it, finds study

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Mumbai: Many of the elderly in India are ill but are unaware of it, according to the latest findings of the ongoing Longitudinal Aging Study in India (LASI) being conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) in Deonar. The latest LASI findings show a gap between self-declaration of chronic diseases and actual incidence measured through blood tests.

When India's first aging study — and the world's largest such study — began over eight years ago, researchers asked the 73,000 participants over 45 years of age to self-report conditions such as diabetes and anaemia. The findings, published in 2020-21, showed that 9.2% of those in the 45-59 age group and 14.2% of the 60-plus age group participants reported having diabetes.

However, as a part of LASI, blood samples of all the participants were collected and analysed for HbA1c — a biomarker test for diabetes. These findings, released last week, showed that 13.3% of the 45-59 age group and 16.2% of the 60-plus age group had high HbA1c, indicating diabetes, said IIPS professor Dr T V Sekher, who is the principal author of the report.

The biomarker tests were conducted on dried blood spots of 64,399 samples and tested at Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute of Translational Virology and AIDS Research laboratory in Pune. Overall, 8% of the adults (age above 45) have undiagnosed diabetes. The study found that the proportion of older adults (age 45 and above) with undiagnosed diabetes ranges from 3% in Himachal Pradesh to 15% in Andhra Pradesh. More than one-tenth of the elderly (age 60+) have undiagnosed diabetes in Andhra Pradesh (16%), Telangana (14%), Chandigarh (12%), and 11% each in Jammu & Kash-

mir, Sikkim, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Tamil Nadu.

While haemoglobin (Hb) levels found in the study indicate a lower prevalence of anaemia compared to other surveys, it showed that 34% of elderly Indian men could have anaemia. "The prevalence of anaemia is 35% among women in the 45-59 age bracket, but increases to 40% among elderly women," said Dr Sekher.

TRACKING GREYING POPULATION'S HEALTH

The Longitudinal Aging Study in India (LASI), conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences in Deonar, is a nationally representative longitudinal survey that tracks the health, economic and social circumstances of older adults

WHY

> Population of senior citizens, which is currently 10% of the total population, is likely to increase to 20% by 2050

> LASI aims to provide data to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by India's aging population, and to help develop policies and programmes related to aging

LASI will continue for the next 25 years, with respondents surveyed every two years

EARLIER FINDINGS

The first wave report published in 2020-21 showed...

5.7% of those above 60 years **lived alone** as against 1.4% of those in the 45-59 age group

13.8% in the 60+ age group **smoked** as against 10.8% in the 45-59 age group

11.2% of the 60+ said they **practised yoga, meditation** as against 1.5% in the 45-59 age group

34.6% of the 60+ said they had **cardiovascular problems** as against 21.9% in the 45-59 age group

32% of the 60+ claimed they had **hypertension** as against 20.5% in 45-59 age group

14.2% of the 60+ claimed they had **diabetes** as against 9.2% in the 45-59 age group

4.7% of the 60+ claimed they had **anaemia** as against 4.7% in 45-59 age group

0.8% of the 60+ claimed they had **depression** as 0.5% in the 45-59 age group

DATA RELEASED LAST WEEK

Blood tests reports found many were unaware of their medical condition

DIABETES

● Among older adults (age 45+), more than one-tenth (15%) reported raised HbA1c levels ($\geq 6.5\%$) (diabetic), while one-third (32%) are within the pre-diabetic range (5.7-6.4%)

● Raised HbA1c levels are more prevalent among elderly (age 60+) at 16%, compared to 13% in adults (45-59 age group)

● Diabetes is higher among older adults (45+) who are economically better off

ANAEMIA

● Among adult men (45-59 age group), prevalence of any anaemia is 21%, & for elderly men (60+), it increases to 34%

● Among adult women, prevalence of any anaemia is 35%, and for elderly women, it increases to 40%

● Prevalence of severe anaemia is slightly higher in elderly women (3%) than in men (2%)

● Anaemia among older women (age 45+) is higher among poorest sections



Woman assaulted

Rebecca Samer...

Mumbai: A special court on Tuesday granted a 40-year-old teacher accused of Protection of Children Sexual Offences (POCSO) for sexually assaulting a 14-year-old male pupil in a school where she formerly employed the detailed order made available to a mother of the child last month. Seeking the man's defence, Raj Yadav and his wife submitted a petition against her "fabricated".

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