

Chennai, Mumbai and Bengaluru rate highest in Hypertension and Diabetes

As we spend hours with our laptop screens and live vicariously through our smart phones, our bodies are revolting in insidious ways.

An eye-opening study by Hyderabad-based eKincare, India's fastest growing technology-led healthcare startup, shows that diabetes and hypertension are becoming increasingly common among young professionals in top-tier Indian cities. With strategic partners in over 2000 locations in the country, eKincare's AI-powered 'personal health assistant' reads medical data from health records and various healthcare interventions, predicts health risks and provides timely personalised recommendations to beat those risks.

The startup is disrupting the way 'employee health spends' are perceived in India by helping enterprises in reaching their optimal health and save on healthcare costs; thereby helping them become more strategic and efficient in their employee benefits spend. eKincare's study, conducted among 15,000 people in four cities, found that Chennai has the highest number of people with diabetes (6.1%), pre-diabetes (6.8%), and hypertension (8.4%). Mumbai comes second with 3.6% people with diabetes, and Bangalore follows Chennai with 5.1% in pre-diabetes and 6.8% with hypertension.

The median age of respondents in the study was 29 years, with 25% below 26 years, 75% below 34 years and 95% below 43 years. The male-female ratio was 54:46.

Hypertension and diabetes are often correlated. People with diabetes are more likely to develop hypertension and high blood pressure is known to increase the risk of developing diabetes. Common risk factors such as sedentary lifestyle, obesity, alcohol consumption and smoking, can cause a double whammy.

According to the study, young professionals in Chennai lead the most sedentary lifestyle (56.7%), with those in Bengaluru (47.3%), Hyderabad (38.7%) and Mumbai (27.4%) following suit. The prevalence of obesity was found to be highest in Mumbai (33.5%), followed by Chennai (30%), Hyderabad (24.4%) and Bengaluru (17%).

When it comes to smoking, Mumbai records the highest percentage of smokers (7.6%), followed closely by Bengaluru (7.3%), Chennai (6.8%) and Hyderabad (6.3%). Studies show that even occasional smoking can increase the risk of hypertension and diabetes. Interestingly, Mumbai tops the list of occasional smokers as well, with 11.1 percent of the respondents claiming that they don't smoke often. Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad are not too far behind at 10.1 percent, 9.9 percent and 9.5 percent respectively.

A similar trend is seen in alcohol consumption. Mumbai records the highest number of people who consume alcohol frequently (4.9 percent) as well as occasionally (46.6 percent). The number of occasional alcohol drinkers is significantly higher than those who drink alcohol regularly in Bengaluru (3.8 percent and 44.4 percent), Hyderabad (3.4 percent and 38.5 percent) and Chennai (2.8 percent and 35.9 percent) as well.

Kiran Kalakuntla, Founder and CEO, eKincare, said, "Our lifestyles are changing, and so are the health risks. Young professionals, in their 20s and 30s, are battling lifestyle diseases like diabetes and hypertension. The key is to identify the risk factors and ensure timely intervention to reduce complications that can lead to morbidity and ever-increasing healthcare expenditure. Not many people realise that even occasional smoking and alcohol consumption can significantly increase the risk of hypertension and diabetes. The need of the hour is to prevent and predict the onset of these health conditions.