

COVID-19 and Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases

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Editorial

Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are long-term illnesses that are not caused by an acute infection, progress slowly, and cannot be passed from person to person. These diseases affect people of all ages and are a public health concern because they are a source of morbidity in the context of the global population's ageing process and due to an unhealthy lifestyle. They are the world's largest cause of mortality and disability. These disorders have long-term health implications and frequently necessitate long-term therapy and care. Other essential problems, such as accidents and mental health disorders, are also classified as non-communicable diseases. Many NCDs can be avoided by avoiding common risk factors like smoking, drinking too much alcohol, being inactive, and eating unhealthy foods. The response to NCDs must include screening, monitoring, and therapy, as well as palliative care. NCDs claim the lives of 41 million people each year, accounting for 71% of all fatalities worldwide. Each year, 5.5 million people in the Americas die as a result of these diseases. An estimated 15 million people between the ages of 30 and 69 die each year from NCD-related causes, with low and middle-income countries accounting for more than 85 % of these early fatalities. NCDs claim the lives of 2.2 million people in the Americas region before they reach the age of 70.

On a global scale, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of NCD fatalities, followed by cancer, respiratory illnesses, and diabetes. More than 80% of all premature deaths are caused by these four kinds of disorders. The existence of NCDs has been considered as a negative prognosis for the disease's progression in the current pandemic, which affects the population of all regions. NCDs have a bad influence on people's immune systems, which are harmed by microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, and fungi), parasites, and other things. This effect is more pronounced in persons over 60 years old. The immune system loses its ability to recognize foreign antigens in this age range, which is why autoimmune illnesses are more common. Patients over 60 years of age, as well as carriers of NCDs, have the highest mortality rates.

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In the last 40 years, humanity has been hit by three major pandemics that have claimed many lives: the rise in the incidence and prevalence of chronic Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs), the pandemic of the disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus-AIDS (HIV/AIDS), and, most recently, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. NCDs have a higher level of concern among the scientific health guild for several reasons: the large number of affected cases with well-known increasing incidence rates, their gradual contribution to general mortality, because they are the most common cause of disability, and because of the high cost of hospitalization, medical treatment, and subsequent rehabilitation. Several reasons have contributed to its emergence as a public health issue: On a global scale, social, cultural, political, and economic changes influenced the lifestyle and living conditions of a huge percentage of the population: the factors that influence one's health on a social level.

The pandemic has had a negative impact on the resources allocated to diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care for these patients, while the confinement measures have resulted in an increase in behavioural risk factors for the development and progression of non-communicable diseases, as it is linked to increased physical inactivity, poor diet, and alcohol consumption.