

Noncommunicable Disease Risk Factor Surveillance in India: Leveraging Research to National Action

The burden of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and their risk factors in India is high enough to warrant institution of immediate preventive and control measures. Recognizing the lack of a National NCD surveillance system in the country, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) planned and coordinated a six site pilot study, from 2003-2006, which provided the experience for developing a national strategy for the country. The ICMR has been identified by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India as the nodal agency to implement the NCD risk factor surveys under the World Bank supported National Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP) in 29 States and Union Territories in 3 phases between 2007-2009. Thereafter, the States will repeat these surveys every 3 yearly through their own resources. A representative sampling design will obtain State level prevalence of tobacco, alcohol, fruits, vegetable consumption, physical activity, blood pressure and body mass index. Men and women aged 15-64 years residing in urban and rural areas will be included in the survey. The survey implementation is underway through a network of reputed institutions. Over a 3 year period we have demonstrated research being successfully translated to a national action plan. This surveillance activity will generate trends of selected NCD risk factors over time and, provide useful inputs to the proposed National Program on Prevention and Control of Cardiovascular Diseases, Diabetes and Stroke for instituting appropriate interventions.

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