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# Prioritise Preventive Healthcare on World Health Day: Experts

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*As the world observes World Health Day, healthcare experts and leaders are emphasizing the critical importance of preventive healthcare, urging stakeholders to prioritize it as a national imperative. They stress that fostering a culture of preventive healthcare is essential for building a healthy society.*

India faces a dual health challenge, grappling with both non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and communicable diseases (CDs). The World Health Organization warns that one in four Indians faces the risk of succumbing to an NCD before the age of 70. This looming health crisis not only affects individuals but also imposes a significant economic burden. According to the World Economic Forum, India could bear a staggering burden of \$4.58 trillion from 2012 to 2030 due to NCDs and mental health issues.

Dr. Vivek Agarwala, Director & Sr Consultant - Medical & Haemato Oncology at Narayana Hospital, Howrah & NH RN Tagore Hospital, highlights the importance of raising awareness about preventive tests and screenings. He emphasizes the need to detect potential health issues early to prevent them from becoming serious and life-threatening conditions.

"Cardiovascular diseases and cancers are increasingly affecting young populations. Therefore, preventive tests and screenings should begin at 25 years of age instead of the previous benchmark of 40 years," adds Dr. Agarwala.

Preventive healthcare plays a pivotal role in promoting overall well-being and reducing the burden of disease. By advocating for proactive measures such as regular screenings, vaccinations,

healthy lifestyle choices, and early intervention, preventive healthcare aims to address health issues before they escalate.

Ms. Sugandh Ahluwalia, Chief Strategy Officer at Indian Spinal Injuries Centre (ISIC), underscores the importance of prioritizing preventive measures for both physical and mental health. She urges individuals to embrace healthy lifestyles and wellness practices to safeguard their well-being.

Investing in preventive healthcare not only benefits individuals but also contributes to the collective health and prosperity of society, according to Ms. Ahluwalia.

According to the Indian Heart Health Association, a significant percentage of heart attacks in India occur in men under the age of 50, with a rising trend observed in younger age groups. Sedentary lifestyles, poor dietary habits, stress, and environmental factors contribute to this alarming shift.

Dr. Manisha Arora, Unit Head and Sr. Consultant, Internal Medicine at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, emphasizes the need for early preventive screening to detect heart disease risk factors and markers in their early stages.

Experts stress the importance of a proactive strategy that prioritizes prevention alongside medical advancements and technological innovations. By doing so, India can pave the way towards a healthier society and a more prosperous nation, alleviating the strain on healthcare systems and improving health outcomes for all.

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