



PEN-PLUS Strategy Against Non-Communicable Diseases

For Prelims: PEN-PLUS Strategy, non-communicable diseases (NCD), World Health Organisation (WHO), 'disability-adjusted life years' (DALYs), National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular disease and Stroke (NPCDCS), National Health Mission (NHM), Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), mDiabetes, mCessation.

For Mains: Impacts of Non-Communicable Disease.

Why in News?

Recently, Africa has adopted a new strategy called **PEN-PLUS Strategy** to boost access to the diagnosis, treatment and care of severe [Non-Communicable Diseases \(NCD\)](#).

What is Pen Plus Strategy?

- It's a **regional strategy to address severe Non-Communicable Diseases at First-Level Referral Health Facilities**.
 - The strategy is aimed at **bridging the access gap in treatment and care of patients with chronic and severe NCDs**.
- It urges countries to put in place standardised programmes to tackle chronic and serious non-communicable diseases by ensuring that essential medicines, technologies and diagnostics are available and accessible in district hospitals

What are Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD)?

- **About:**
 - **Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are medical conditions or diseases that are not caused by infectious agents.**
 - These are **chronic diseases of long duration, and generally slow progression and are the result of a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behaviours factors**.
 - These diseases are those chronic conditions that **lead to high levels of disability and death among children, adolescents and young adults if left undiagnosed or untreated**.
 - NCDs include heart diseases, cancers, diabetes, asthma among others.
 - Globally, NCDs are the main cause of morbidity and mortality.
 - They **account for 71% of global mortality**, according to [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#).
 - In the African Region, the proportion of mortality due to NCDs ranges from 27-88%.

What is the status of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) in India?

▪ **About:**

- In India, nearly **5.8 million people (WHO report, 2015) die from NCDs (heart and lung diseases, stroke, cancer and diabetes) every year** or in other words 1 in 4 Indians has a risk of dying from an NCD before they reach the age of 70.
 - Further, it is found that **there is an increase in the contribution of NCDs from 30% of the total disease burden- 'disability-adjusted life years' (DALYs) in 1990 to 55% in 2016** and also an increase in proportion of deaths due to NCDs (among all deaths) from 37% in 1990 to 61% in 2016.
 - The four major NCDs are cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancers, chronic respiratory diseases (CRDs) and diabetes.

▪ **Causes:**

- **Physical inactivity, unhealthy diets (diets low in fruit, vegetables, and whole grains, but high in salt and fat), tobacco use (smoking, secondhand smoke, and smokeless tobacco), and the harmful use of alcohol** are the main behavioural risk factors for NCDs.
 - They contribute to raised blood pressure (hypertension),
 - Raised blood sugar (diabetes),
 - Raised and abnormal blood lipids (dyslipidaemia),
 - Further, **air pollution is also a leading risk factor for NCDs** in terms of both outdoor air pollution and household air pollution that mainly results from burning solid fuels in the home for cooking and heat.

▪ **Initiatives:**

- **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular disease and Stroke (NPCDCS):**
 - With the objective to **increase awareness of risk factors, to set up infrastructure (like NCD clinics, cardiac care units)** and to carry out opportunistic screening at primary health care levels.
 - In response to the **WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020.**
 - India is the **first country to adopt the National Action Plan with specific national targets and indicators** aimed at reducing the number of global **premature deaths from NCDs by 25% by 2025.**
 - **Sub Components:**
 - **Integration of NPCDCS** with the [National Health Mission \(NHM\)](#) resulted into **augmented infrastructure** and **human resources** particularly in the form of **frontline workers- the ANM and the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA).**
 - **Prevention and management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and chronic Kidney disease (CKD),** and better management of co-morbidities such as diabetes and tuberculosis are also considered under the programme.
- **Integration of Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH) NPCDCS** is a further step for promoting healthy lifestyle changes among the population.
 - Health promotion through social media is also being used to generate awareness about prevention and control of NCDs,
 - such as use of mobile technology in applications called **mDiabetes** for diabetes control, **mCessation** to help quit tobacco, and **no more tension** as a support for mental stress management.

[Source: DTE](#)