

## **Hyd hosts media dialogue on hypertension management & eliminating TFAs**

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**Our Bureau, Mumbai**

A media dialogue on hypertension management and elimination of trans-fatty acids (TFAs) was held at a hotel in Hyderabad recently.

“A programme to fight against non-communicable diseases and trans-fatty acids is the need of the hour,” said experts.

Trans-fatty acids are bad cholesterol, or an artificial food that is made in factories, or an unhealthy substance that is made through the chemical process of hydrogenation of oils.

The objective of this programme was consumer education. As a part of this, a media dialogue with experts was planned to sensitise people about the health hazards of the issue.

Senior bureaucrats from the Government of Telangana and experts from institutions like NIMS, FSSAI, NIN, CallHealth, Apollo and Virinchi Hospitals participated and spoke on the occasion.

Speaking on elimination of trans-fatty acids in Telangana, Dr K Shankar, director, food safety, said, “Strict implementation of regulations of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) can sharply reduce heart diseases caused by TFAs in foods.”

Further, he informed that they were planning bring out dietary guidelines aim to reduce trans-fatty acids, salt and sugar in commercially-available food in Telangana state.

“We have trained over 2,000 street food vendors in food safety training and certification, and are planning to train 10,000 food vendors in the year 2019. We have found that 60 per cent of prepared food business goes through the street food trading, like hawkers, mobile vending machines, petty shops, dhabas, street food hubs, etc. That is why we have chosen them to train, he informed,” Shankar said.

“This was done as a part of the Eat Right Movement. The Eat Right Movement, as you all know, is built on two broad pillars of Eat Healthy and Eat Safe, aims to engage, excite and enable citizens to improve their health and well-being.led by FSSAI.

The health problems associated with trans-fats include increase in the level of bad cholesterol (LDL); increased risk of heart diseases; increase in body weight, risk of insulin resistance, risk of developing certain types of cancers and others,” Shankar added.

“Trans-fatty acids are used because of longer preservation, to get desired shape and texture of the food, cheaper, easy availability and comes as a substitute to pure ghee,” he added.

Delivering the keynote address, on Telangana’s commitment to fighting non-communicable diseases, A Shanti Kumari, principal secretary, health, family welfare and food safety commissioner, Telangana, said, “Providing total medical care is an area of the prime focus of the Telangana government, and management of hypertension is a key component in that.”

She added that the three-pronged approach, comprising early screening through outreach followed by a dispensation of secondary and tertiary medical care, adopted by the state government has proved effective in managing hypertension.

“We have screened 85 lakh people in the state, of which 10 to 12 per cent were found to be having hypertension. In West, everyone is screened. But, not here. Further, there is a lack of initial screening here,” Kumari stated.

“Medicines are made available at all levels of healthcare centres across the state since regular review and dispensation of medicines are important. As a part of this, one month’s medicines are provided to patients so that they remain on treatment,” she added.

“Healthcare has always been at the centre of the Government of Telangana. We are never shy to take good models from other parts of the country also,” Kumari said, adding, “We are not shy to learn good models from any state.”

“KCR Kit is a beautifully-designed scheme. Through this, we have covered lakh people under this scheme. The government has spent Rs 800 crore on this flagship programme,” she informed.

“Non-communicable diseases (NCD) is has become a predominant reason for death now. The burden of it is on the rise. The disease burden due to communicable, maternal, neonatal and nutritional diseases (CMNNDs) is 27.6 per cent, NCDs is 59.2 per cent and injuries 13.2 per cent,” shared Gangadhar Taduri, professor and head, Unit-1, Department of Nephrology, NIMS, Hyderabad, and technical advisor to minister of health, Telangana.

“Twenty per cent of the population of Telangana has hypertension. The state government, in the past five years, has spent Rs 4,000 crore to manage various diseases. Of this, Rs 850 crore is spent on heart diseases, Rs 700 crore on kidney, Rs 50 crore on cancer and Rs 120 crore on brain-related diseases,” he informed.

“The disease burden of Telangana comprises hypertension, diabetes, anaemia, cardiovascular diseases, kidney diseases, stroke, cancer and bone fracture (trauma/non-trauma),” he informed, while speaking on NCDs(Non-Communicable Diseases): A Major Health Issue in Telangana.

Dr (Col) M Sitaram, senior consultant, cardiology, Apollo Hospitals, while speaking on the rising burden of hypertension in Telangana, said, “Hypertension accounts for 57 per cent of stroke-related deaths. It is the true silent killer. Globally approximately 26 per cent of the

population (972million) are suffering from hypertension. The number is likely to go up to 29 per cent by the year 2025.

China, India, Russia, the USA and Indonesia are the countries with the highest number of deaths due to high blood pressure. According to the Big BP Study, the prevalence of hypertension in India is 29.7 per cent. 42.9 per cent of young in the age group of 18 to 19 years are suffering from pre-hypertension. India accounts for 17.6 per cent of the global hypertension burden.

“People must follow low salt, low-fat, low saturated fat and low-trans fat diet and eat plenty of dietary fibre, fruits and vegetables to stop hypertension,” Dr Sitaram stated.

“Hyderabadi Bandi food is very tasty, but at the same time, it is also toxic. The film fraternity must be sensitised about the harmful effects of hypertension and trans-fatty acids, so that the cinema as a medium can be explored to create more awareness,” he added.

Eram S Rao, associate professor and head, department of food technology, Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences, University of Delhi, delved on Trans-fatty Acids in Food: A Major Risk Factor for Cardiovascular Diseases.

“India loses the \$237 billion in national income due to NCD mortality (2006-2015). By 2030, the productivity loss is expected to double to 17.9 million. It is also estimated that of the 64 million estimated global deaths, a staggering 41 million are from chronic diseases,” she said.

Rao added, “By eliminating trans-fats, globally by 2023, we can save more than 10 million lives. For every two per cent of calorie intake from trans-fats, a person’s heart disease risk increases by an incredible 23 per cent (2006).”

“We need to be careful from trans-fats that are found in hydrogenated vegetable oils, fast foods, cakes, pastries, chocolates and deep-fried foods,” she stated.

“In India 77,130 deaths (the highest in the world) annually are due to trans fats consumption. According to the WHO (World Health Organization), every year TFAs, on an average causes an estimated 5,40,000 lakh deaths globally. Every year, heart diseases are responsible for 4.12 per cent of all deaths due to trans fats consumption,” Rao said.

“Alternative fats like fully hydrogenated fats and inter-esterified fats are already available as viable options, which are cost-effective and do not alter the taste or appearance of food,” she added.

Dr K Sarat Chandra, former president, Cardiological Society of India, and currently senior consultant interventional cardiologist, Virinchi Hospitals, deliberated on the role of media in reducing NCDs and eliminating trans-fatty acids in the youngest state of India, Telangana.

He said, “Avoiding transfats in food is important as it can increase the LDL cholesterol and decrease the HDL cholesterol. Educating policymakers, children, mothers and the public, besides creating awareness through media will help to tackle the issue.”

Dr Kamala Kirshnaswamy, former director, National Institute of Nutrition, emphasised the need to reduce the salt content in food and added that flavours other than salt can be used to enhance the taste of food.

The half-day programme culminated in a panel discussion on Comprehensive Primary Health Care for Hypertension Management. The panellists included Taduri and Dr Hari Thalapali, chief executive officer, Call Health, Hyderabad.