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AIG Hospitals publishes worldâ??s largest population-based study on Inflammatory Bowel Disease

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Worldâ??s largest population-based study on IBD with 30,000 symptomatic patients

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) is a chronic illness characterised by symptoms varying from bloody diarrhoea, weight loss, fever, fatigue, abdominal pain to anemia, joint pain, skin problems among others. The incidence of IBD in India has been on an exponential increase over the past couple of decades, but it was mainly considered an urban disease like in the western countries where the disease has been on an upward trend since 1960s.

It is worth noting that people with longstanding IBD, particularly those with ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease involving the colon, have an increased risk of developing colorectal cancer (CRC) compared to the general population.

“In 2020, we started the Rural Outreach Program 2.0 (First in 2006) in Telangana with an intent to discover the true prevalence of IBD not just including rural places but also making IBD diagnosis/treatment accessible for people in these areas,” Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman, AIG Hospitals said.

Dr Reddy further added that “In three years, we covered more than 150 villages across Telangana touching approx. 1.75 lac people. Data till 2022 has been published in the Lancet. Project is still on-going.”

Dr Reddy has made a four-point appeal to the government as an immediate measure to curb the menace of such diseases especially in the rural areas where we have an opportunity to halt the incidence before it takes up the shape of an epidemic. The suggestions are as below:

1. Increase awareness about lifestyle diseases in rural areas in regional languages and at primary healthcare (PHC) levels
2. Bring regulation on Ultra Processed Food
3. Focus on diet and exercise for rural population too
4. Constant monitoring of the rural population is required

AIG Hospitals’ study on gastrointestinal (GI) diseases effecting the rural population is on-going and plans to include public awareness into the programme collaborating with village PHCs and schools.