

83.5% of adults in India underestimate shingles risk: Global GSK survey

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Globally, shingles will affect up to 1 in 3 people in their lifetime



GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceutical (GSK) has released new data from a globally commissioned survey funded by them. The survey finds notable gaps in understanding of shingles risk among individuals aged above 50 years, a group that is most susceptible to the disease.

The survey conducted amongst 3,500 adults aged 50 and over from 12 countries, assessed respondents' understanding of shingles, what triggers it, and its impact on people's lives.

The survey in India involved 500 participants, with 250 respondents who spoke Hindi and another 250 who spoke English. The data, launched in time for Shingles Awareness Week 2024 (26 February 2024 – 3 March 2024), finds a widespread lack of understanding of shingles and its lifetime risk.

The findings show that globally, a significantly high proportion of those surveyed do not understand their risk of developing shingles, with 86% underestimating that risk. In India, 81% of the English-speaking and 86% of the Hindi-speaking respondents surveyed underestimate the risk of shingles.

In India, amongst the English-speaking respondents, 22% believe that 1 in 1000 adults are at risk of developing shingles. Amongst the Hindi-speaking respondents, 18% believe that 1 in 1000 adults is at risk of developing shingles.

In reality, most adults already have the virus that causes shingles present in their bodies by the age of 50, which may reactivate with advancing age. Shingles is caused by the reactivation of the varicella-zoster virus (VZV), the same virus that causes chickenpox. As people age, the strength of their immune response to infection wanes, and this increases their risk of developing shingles.

Dr Rashmi Hegde, Executive Vice President - Medical Affairs, GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals, India, said, "The survey findings underscore the need to raise awareness about shingles risk in adults over 50. Shingles can significantly disrupt the daily lives of ageing adults and cause them a great deal of discomfort."