

Life Style Diseases

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Changing incidence and pattern of diseases due to changing life style.

There has been a steady increase in the pace of life over the last century due to advent of mechanization. We have progressed from Bullock Cart – Horse Drawn Carriage – to Cycle – Motor Car – Railway – Aero Planes first propeller driven and now Jet propulsion. Or Canoes – sailing Boats – Motor Boats – Ocean Liners – Jet Boats- hydrofoils and Nuclear Powered ships and submarines. We are also witnessing Rockets taking humans to the outer limits of space. The life expectancy of an average individual has gone up from about 30 years to 70 years causing an increased incidence of diseases for advanced age such as Prostate and Osteoporosis.

In the old days when people walked long distances every day and sat cross legged or squatted the incidence of Osteoarthritis of knee and hip was infrequent. Today one finds almost every other person suffering from either or both of these probably due to lack of walking, not sitting on the floor due to availability of chairs and tables and using faulty foot ware. It has been noted that incidence of knee disease is very common in ladies wearing high heels due to improper weight transfer in erect posture. One finds many ladies wearing chappals / Sandals which do not cover the foot completely and hence heels gets pressed on the edge of the footwear causing cracked and painful heels which are easily treatable by using soft soled shoes so that the heel does not get pressed on the edge.

Today people have to travel long distances to go to work and therefore food habits have undergone a sea change. Eating out has become the norm rather than an occasion leading to increases consumption of Junk food which is mainly spicy and fried. **THESE FOODS ARE CONSUMED ON THE MOVE** forgetting the age old teaching of chewing the food properly and eating slowly. These foods are low in vitamins and important nutrients.

There has therefore been a **MARKED RAISE IN INCIDENCE OF INDIGESTION, ACIDITY, HEART BURN, ANEMIA, DYSCENTRY AND DIARRHEA** are common due to the unhygienic conditions in which these foods are prepared and served. These diseases were uncommon when people consumed home cooked food. As these foods are deficient in vegetables and fiber content there has been a marked rise in incidence of haemorrhoids – piles as people when not suffering from diarrhoea tend to become constipated and have to strain during defecation.

Higher consumption of fatty foods, lack of proper exercise and the stress of modern life has led to an increase incidence of diabetes and blood pressure which in turn has led to a very high incidence of heart attacks and kidney failure at much younger age than previously. The faster modes of transport and traffic congestion in cities are leading to an ever increased incidence of crush injuries and fractures.

On the other hand some diseases have become rare or have disappeared due to better immunization at young age such as small pox or polio which is on the verge of eradication from this world. As also whooping cough and diphtheria. There was a time when Peptic Ulcer Perforation and Amoebic Liver Abscesses were very frequent due to the advent of excellent medicines at the level of general practitioners.

Air pollution due to vehicles and industries has led to a very high incidence of lung disease such as Bronchitis, Asthma and Tuberculosis in spite of the availability of excellent drugs for the treatment of these diseases as irregular and inadequate treatment has become the norm due to the fast pace of life and economic considerations. The advent of consumerism due to advertisements and the stress of the fast paced life make people aspire and acquire much more than they can safely afford leading to an exponential increase in the incidence of psychiatric disorders such as depression or schizophrenia. Another factor leading to

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these is the collapse of the Joint family System with its checks and balances and the support system it provided to an individual in times of stress. This is one of the major shortcomings of the Nuclear Family which is now becoming the norm where each individual lives for himself / herself. More so where both partners are working and earning good incomes no one is prepared to adjust or compromise leading to higher incidence of marital discord and divorce. This in turn has led to higher incidence of Juvenile Crime, drug addictions in affected children as they have no one to comfort or control them. This is because the parents become money earning machines that have no quality time for their children who tend to drift away from the family and if they have access to extensive money tend to get involved with undesirable characters and go astray.

Wearing of tight clothes like jeans causes higher incidence of skin infections in groin and genital areas. Higher incidence of teenage sex and lack of morals has led to an alarming increase of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS. Abortions carried out on unwed mothers by poorly qualified medical practitioners or quacks causes an increased incidence of infertility in later life due to blocked tubes.

Increased incidence of Cancer is mainly due to increased life expectancy and to a certain extent due to toxic chemicals and tobacco in any form. As social alcohol consumption raises alcohol addictions is becoming very common even in women leading to cirrhosis of liver and other consequent illness. Increased incidence of smoking causes higher incidence of lung cancer in addition to damage to blood vessels leading to heart attacks, paralysis and kidney damage.

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