

Preface

The Emerging Epidemic of Obesity and Cardiometabolic Risk Factors

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The world is witnessing an obesity pandemic that threatens to pose serious challenge to every country's health system. The projected burden of an enormous continuing increase in the prevalence of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, stroke and some forms of cancer will not only add to morbidity and mortality but would result in tremendous increase in health care expenditure. Obesity is also associated with an insidious, creeping increase in hitherto uncommon diseases such as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and polycystic ovaries syndrome. A cluster of cardiometabolic risk factors has been described in association with obesity. These factors, both individually and collectively, enhance the risk of above mentioned diseases.

Amongst the most worrying problems is a steep rise in the prevalence of obesity among children which makes them much more prone to chronic diseases as they grow older, thereby curtailing both the longevity as well as quality of life(1). As Prof. Kate Steinbeck pointed out at the

recently held 10th International Congress on Obesity in Sydney : '***The children in this generation may be the first in history to die before their parents because of health problems related to weight***'. This phenomenon is already well recognized in developing countries with high infant mortality due to malnutrition, infections and infestations. Nevertheless, with epidimological and demographic transition, the world now has more fat people than hungry ones, with more than a billion overweight people compared to 800 million who are undernourished. Developing nations are facing a 'Double Trouble Syndrome'(2), with unhealthy coexistence of both communicable and non-communicable diseases , alongwith the spectre of HIV looming large on the horizon.

It is therefore timely to give serious thought to preventive aspects especially with regard to childhood obesity(3). It is being increasingly recognized that the environment of the baby and growing child plays a significant role in the development of obesity in childhood and adolescence.

The warning signs identified for enhancing obesity risk include watching more than eight hours of television a week; sleeping fewer than 10.5 hours each night; above average birth weight; obesity in both parents; excessive weight gain in the first year of life and rapid growth between birth and the age of two years.

Taking serious note of these trends in health transition, the CME Committee of NAMS in 2005 decided to organize an intra-mural national symposium devoted to Obesity and the related cardiovascular & metabolic risk factors. We were assigned the task of planning and organization of the symposium which was held at the PGIMER, Chandigarh on November 20, 2005. It required enormous preparatory efforts to ensure wider academic interaction and dissemination of information. Thus the deliberations of the Symposium were transmitted live to postgraduate residents and the Faculty at the Indira Gandhi Medical College, Shimla. This was done with the aid of PGIMER's Telemedicine Centre and the Centre for Development of Advance Computing, Mohali. The Real Time Video Conferencing was done successfully through the 3 BRI ISDN (384 Kbps Integrated Services Digital Network) lines with I.G. Medical College Shimla. The clarity and connectivity was excellent and the participants at Shimla Medical College were gratefully appreciative of such an academic interaction. The extensive coverage in the print and electronic media successfully disseminated health information about the subject content of

Obesity to a wide readership and enlightened community leadership. The successful outcome and impact was therefore most gratifying.

In 2005, NAMS also established and constituted a standing Academic Committee with its objectives focused on enhancing quality of health care through continuing professional development, medical education and biomedical research. In its first meeting, the Academic Committee decided to develop National Guidelines in selected areas of health concerns. One of the topics selected was 'Metabolic Syndrome and Management of Risk Factors such as Dyslipidemia'. It has now been decided that the papers presented at the National Symposium held at Chandigarh should be published as a part of CME Monograph series, and that this publication may constitute an important background document, amongst others, to be deliberated upon by the Expert Group being convened in early 2007 for developing and recommending National guidelines regarding the Diagnosis and Management of Obesity and associated Cardiometabolic Risk Factors. Thus, the present monograph not only reflects the outcome of 2005 NAMS National Symposium, but also projects the futuristic development of background documentation for the 2007 NAMS Expert Group meeting.

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