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The Concept and Challenges of Life Style Diseases: A Short Review

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Abstract

Lifestyle diseases, or non-communicable diseases (NCDs), are caused by unhealthy lifestyle choices and environmental factors. These chronic diseases include cardiovascular disease, type-2 diabetes, and cancer, which are responsible for 71% of global deaths, according to the World Health Organization. Poor diet, lack of physical activity, tobacco, alcohol use, and stress are common causes and risk factors for lifestyle diseases. Lifestyle diseases significantly impact individuals and society, including physical and emotional burdens and economic burdens. Policymakers can play a role in addressing lifestyle diseases by implementing policies and regulations to prevent and manage these conditions, such as a sugar tax or restrictions on tobacco and alcohol use.

Keywords: Lifestyle diseases, non-communicable diseases

INTRODUCTION

Lifestyle diseases, or non-communicable diseases (NCDs), are health conditions caused by unhealthy lifestyle choices and environmental factors. ^[1] These chronic diseases often develop slowly over time, with symptoms often not appearing until later stages. Examples of lifestyle diseases include cardiovascular disease, type-2 diabetes, and cancer. ^[2]

The discussion of lifestyle diseases is crucial because they are a worldwide public health issue. According to the World Health Organization (WHO)^[3], NCDs are responsible for 71% of global deaths, with approximately 15 million people dying prematurely from these diseases each year. Additionally, lifestyle diseases are preventable, and many can be managed through lifestyle interventions and medical treatment. By understanding the causes and risk factors of lifestyle diseases and prevention and management strategies, individuals can take proactive steps to protect their health and well-being. Policymakers can also use this information to develop effective policies and regulations to reduce the burden of lifestyle diseases on society.

TYPES

Lifestyle diseases are a group of chronic conditions largely preventable and linked to unhealthy lifestyle choices. Here are some common examples of lifestyle diseases:

Cardiovascular disease (CVD):

This includes heart disease, stroke, and other conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels. A combination of factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, physical inactivity, and poor diet often causes CVD.

Type 2 diabetes: This condition affects how the body processes blood sugar (glucose). It is linked to obesity, lack of physical activity, and poor diet.

Cancer:

Certain types of cancer, such as breast, colon, and lung cancer, have been linked to lifestyle factors like tobacco and alcohol use, poor diet, and physical inactivity.

CAUSES

The causes and risk factors of lifestyle diseases are multifactorial, but some of the most common factors include the following:

Poor diet: A diet high in processed foods, unhealthy fats, salt, and sugar can increase the risk of developing lifestyle diseases.

physical Inactivity: Sedentary lifestyles can increase the risk of obesity, diabetes, and other lifestyle diseases.

Tobacco and alcohol use: Tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption are major risk factors for many lifestyle diseases, including CVD and cancer.

Stress: Chronic stress can negatively affect the body, increasing the risk of heart disease and other lifestyle diseases.

Understanding these causes and risk factors is essential for preventing and managing lifestyle diseases. By making positive lifestyle choices such as eating a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol use, and managing stress levels, individuals can reduce their risk of developing lifestyle diseases.

PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Preventing and managing lifestyle diseases involves a combination of lifestyle interventions and medical treatment. Here are some examples of each:

(a) Lifestyle interventions: These are changes in behavior and habits that can help prevent and manage lifestyle diseases.

They include:

Healthy eating: A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats can help reduce the risk of lifestyle diseases.

Physical activity: Regular exercise can help improve cardiovascular health, maintain a healthy weight, and reduce the risk of many lifestyle diseases.

Stress reduction: Managing stress through techniques such as mindfulness, yoga, and meditation can help reduce the risk of lifestyle diseases.

(b) Medical interventions: These are treatments healthcare professionals provide to help manage lifestyle diseases. They include:

Medication: Certain medications can help control blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and blood sugar in individuals with lifestyle diseases.

Surgery: In some cases, surgery may be necessary to manage lifestyle diseases such as CVD or cancer.

It is important to note that lifestyle interventions are often the first line of defense against lifestyle diseases, and in some cases, they can be just as effective as medication or surgery. Individuals should work with their healthcare professionals to determine the best approach for preventing and managing their lifestyle disease based on their circumstances.

IMPACT OF LIFESTYLE DISEASES

Lifestyle diseases have a significant impact on both individuals and society as a whole. Here are some examples:

(a) Physical and emotional burden on individuals: Lifestyle diseases can cause a significant physical and emotional

burden on individuals, including:

Reduced quality of life: Lifestyle diseases can cause chronic pain, disability, and other health problems that significantly reduce an individual's quality of life.

Emotional distress: The burden of lifestyle diseases can also cause emotional pain, including depression, anxiety, and social isolation.

Increased risk of premature death: Lifestyle diseases can increase the risk of early death, significantly impacting individuals and their families.

(b) The economic burden on society: Lifestyle diseases also have a significant economic impact on society, including:

Healthcare costs: Lifestyle diseases account for a large portion of healthcare spending in many countries. This includes the cost of these conditions' diagnosis, treatment, and ongoing management.

Lost productivity: Lifestyle diseases can also lead to lost productivity due to missed work days, reduced work capacity, and early retirement.

Economic inequality: Lifestyle diseases disproportionately affect lower-income individuals and communities, leading to economic and social disparities.

Addressing the economic burden of lifestyle diseases requires a coordinated effort from policymakers, healthcare professionals, and the broader community.

^[4] This includes implementing effective prevention and management strategies, promoting healthy lifestyle choices, and addressing social and economic factors contributing to developing lifestyle diseases. ^[5]

ADDRESSING LIFESTYLE DISEASES AT THE POLICY LEVEL

Addressing lifestyle diseases at the policy level involves implementing policies and

regulations to prevent and manage these conditions. Here are some examples:

Sugar tax: A sugar tax is a policy that taxes sugary drinks and other high- sugar products to discourage their consumption. This policy aims to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks, which are linked to the development of conditions such as obesity, type-2 diabetes, and CVD.

Smoking bans: Smoking bans are policies that prohibit smoking in public places and workplaces. These policies aim to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, which is linked to the development of lung cancer, CVD, and other health problems. While policies and regulations can effectively prevent and manage lifestyle diseases, there are challenges and limitations to addressing these conditions at the policy level. Some of these challenges include:

Resistance from industries: Industries that produce and market unhealthy products may resist policies aimed at reducing consumption of these products, as they may negatively impact their profits.

Public perception: Some individuals may perceive policies to reduce lifestyle diseases as intrusive or unnecessary and resist them.

Implementation challenges: Despite these challenges, addressing lifestyle diseases at the policy level is an essential strategy for reducing the burden of these conditions on individuals and society. Policymakers can play a critical role in preventing and managing lifestyle diseases by implementing policies and regulations that promote healthy lifestyle choices and reduce exposure to unhealthy products and behaviors. ^[6]

CONCLUSION

Lifestyle diseases are a significant public health challenge, with poor diet, lack of

physical activity, tobacco and alcohol use, and stress being major risk factors for their development.

To address lifestyle diseases, individuals must take responsibility for their health by making healthy choices, such as engaging in regular physical activity, eating a balanced diet, avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol use, and managing stress. At the same time, policymakers are critical in implementing policies and regulations to reduce exposure to unhealthy products and behaviors, promote healthy lifestyle choices, and address social and economic factors contributing to developing lifestyle diseases.

In conclusion, lifestyle diseases are preventable and manageable through individual and collective action. By working together, we can reduce the burden of lifestyle diseases on individuals, families, and society and improve overall health and well-being. Our collective responsibility is to take action and address the growing epidemic of lifestyle diseases.

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