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Health Secretary inaugurates Cohort Study Centre

The study will have generational impact: C K Mishra

Shri C.K. Mishra, Secretary (HFW) inaugurated AIIMS Cohort Study Centre, here today. Launching the project, he stated that this study will go a long way in preventing many diseases and will have a generational impact. Speaking at the function, Shri Mishra further added that this study will provide valuable data on the health needs of the country and will have landmark impact on the kind of work AIIMS is doing.

“The importance of the study derives from the increasing portion of elderly population in the country. It is urgent and imperative that preventive strategies based on the sound epidemiologic evidence are devised and implemented,” Shri Mishra said.

The AIIMS Cohort Study is unique and probably one of its kind combining conventional and novel risk factors, genomics and neuroimaging to determine protective and risk factors for stroke and cognitive decline. Unique also in a way that AIIMS is going to people, rather than people coming to AIIMS. By creating awareness about healthy aging and making assessment of their general and brain health, the study provides an opportunity for people to prevent disease and promote their health. By carrying out repeated general and brain health assessment through MRI and memory testing and genetic testing, the study will throw light on novel protective and predictive factors. The knowledge and understanding thus gained will help the people to prevent stroke and cognitive decline.

The focus of the study is to determine genetic, lifestyle and socioeconomic factors that are protective or risk factors for the occurrence of stroke, heart attack or cognitive decline in persons aged 50 years and above. Dr. Kameshwar Prasad, Head of Neurology, is the Principal Investigator of the study. The study is supported by the Department of Bio-Technology, M/o Science & Technology, Government of India with contributions from the Erasmus University, Netherlands.

India has made outstanding gains in terms of increase in life-expectancy. As a result, India’s older population will increase dramatically over the next four decades. Population above 60 years age is estimated to increase from 100 million in 2011 to 323 million in 2050. This demographic transition is set to increase disease burden due to various non-communicable diseases. Alzheimer’s disease, vascular dementia, cerebro vascular diseases are likely to top the list of causes of disease burden.

Also present at the function were Prof. K. Vijay Raghavan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Prof. M C Misra, Director, AIIMS, New Delhi, and Mr. Jelle Nijdam, Counsellor for Science, Technology & Innovation, Embassy of The Netherlands along with faculty and seniors officers from the AIIMs.
