

55 per cent Indians above the age of 60 suffer from a chronic disease, shows study

Synopsis

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NEW DELHI: Around 55 per cent people above the age of 60 years suffer from a **chronic disease**, according to the wave one of the **Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI)** released on Wednesday.

According to the report, around 40 per cent have some form of **disability** and 20 per cent suffer from **mental health**

issues. Also, 27 per cent of this population group, which translates to roughly 35 million people, have multi-morbidities.

The LASI Wave 1 field survey, which was conducted across 35 states and Union Territories from April 2017 to December 2018 was released by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan virtually on Wednesday.

Vardhan said that in the 2011 census report, people above 60 years accounted for 8.6 per cent of India's population, that is 103 million elderly people. Growing at around 3 per cent annually, the elderly population will rise to 319 million in 2050.

"This report will provide a base for national and state-level programmes and policies for the elderly population," he was quoted as saying in a health ministry statement.

LASI is a full-scale national survey of scientific investigation of the health, economic, and social determinants and consequences of population ageing in India.

The National Programme for Health Care of Elderly and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have undertaken the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India, through International Institute for Population Sciences, (IIPS), Mumbai in collaboration with Harvard School of Public Health, University of Southern California, United Nations Population Fund and National Institute on Ageing.

The LASI, Wave 1 report covered a baseline sample of 72,250 individuals aged 45 and above and their spouses, that included 31,464 people aged 60 and above and 6,749 oldest-old persons aged 75 and above from all states and Union Territories excluding Sikkim.

Vardhan said, "It is India's first and the world's largest-ever survey that provides a longitudinal database for designing policies and programmes for the older population in the broad domains of social, health, and economic wellbeing.

"The evidence from LASI will be used to further strengthen and broaden the scope of National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly and also help in establishing a range of preventive and healthcare programmes for the older population and most vulnerable among them."

Restating the commitments of the government to healthy ageing, the health minister said, "We should ensure that the elderly are provided with the best medical care. India has one of the ambitious programme of the world, Ayushman Bharat Yojna, which focuses on the expansion of the healthcare facilities."

He affirmed that the LASI data shall assist in addressing the broad aims of the Decade of Healthy Ageing and will lead to convergence within various national health programmes and also promote inter-sectoral coordination with other departments and ministries.

"About 45 million have cardiovascular diseases and hypertension, 20 million suffer from diabetes, and 24 per cent of the elderly have difficulty in performing daily functions such as walking, eating, toileting, according to this survey," said KS James, director of The International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, the nodal institution for implementing the survey.

"Even if we assume 90 per cent of these people are taken care at home, there is still 10 per cent, that translates into 3.5 to 4 million who would require professional help," he said.