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# The not-so-sweet truth about most diabetics in Mumbai

Jyoti Shelar / DNA Wednesday, February 3, 2010 0:15 IST

**Mumbai:** India is referred to as the diabetes capital of the world, but ironically a very high per cent of diabetics visit a doctor, seeking treatment for secondary ailments, completely oblivious of their sugar levels. The Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) has found that around 73% Mumbaikars suffering from diabetes and 88% non-diabetics are ignorant of basic info like normal blood sugar levels.

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According to the latest statistics released by International Diabetes Federation, India has 50.8 million diabetics. But the IMRB study, carried out across six cities, found the awareness about the ailment to be “negligible”.

Unfortunately, Mumbai has made it to the top slot with 24% diabetics having not checked their blood sugar levels for more than a year. Also, a whopping 53% of respondents from the city feel that they are less likely to be affected by diabetes.

The study was carried out between October 2009 and January 2010 in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Ahmedabad. It was based on 600 respondents - both diabetic and non-diabetic - between the age group of 35 to 60 years of age.

Most of those surveyed were found to be unaware about the HbA1C test (believed to be the right indicator of the blood glucose control). Only 15% of the respondents admitted to being aware about the utility of the test. According to Dr Manoj Chhada, endocrinologist and diabetologist at Hinduja Hospital, most patients do not have immediate health complaints or any symptoms. So, they are ignorant about their blood sugar levels. “There is a definite need for better sensitisation,” he said.

According to Chhada, not many voluntarily take any test to determine diabetics. “Majority of diabetics come to a doctor with complaints of secondary ailments like poor healing of wounds, passing excessive urine and unexplained weight loss,” Chhada said. Excessive hunger and giddiness are also some of the symptoms of diabetes.

Malad-based diabetologist Dr Pradeep Gadge said the myths about diabetes are galore. “Patients think that only controlling sugar intake can prevent diabetics,” Gadge said. “Most of them don’t know that cholesterol levels and triglycerides also need to be controlled in order to control diabetics.”

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