

## Knowledge and attitude regarding NCDs among adolescents: A comparative study between government and private schools students

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NCDs are a huge silent killer accounting for approximately 74% global deaths. A huge young population, of above 1.3 billion, 1 in 4 individual possesses a risk of dying from an NCD before they reach the age of 70. Most of the chronic disease risk factors being unhealthy lifestyle behaviours are acquired during adolescent age groups. In this study we have compared knowledge and attitude of adolescents in private and government schools in Himachal Pradesh towards NCDs using t-test. It also investigates the differential pattern of relationship among variables of knowledge and attitude towards NCDs in terms of nature and magnitude among these students. NCDs Knowledge Measure and NCDs Attitude Measure tests have been used to assess the knowledge and attitudes prevalent among school going adolescents. Results depicted that though private school students displayed a higher knowledge of NCDs than government school students ( $t=2.57, p<.05$ ), government school students reported a significant relationship between knowledge and attitude about NCDs ( $r=.401, p<.05$ ). This indicates that higher knowledge may not necessarily reason or trigger attitudinal change among the students of private schools, however among government school students, level of knowledge becomes a source of attitudinal change towards NCDs. Combined efforts of parents, teachers and school management may encourage children to seek more and proper knowledge about health and health risk factors. Furthermore, bringing these issues in to the public domain by organizing health talks and discussions can lower the risk of developing NCDs at this young stage. Imparting knowledge and strengthening positive attitudes toward prevention of NCDs among young people would prepare the young adults with a pro-active and positive approach towards NCDs.

**Keywords:** NCDs, Knowledge, and Attitude.

Non-communicable diseases or chronic diseases are a combination of genetic, physiological, environmental and behavioural factors making them non-transmissible and of long duration. Commonly, NCDs include hypertension, cardiovascular disorder (CVD), diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and Cancer. NCDs occur due to many factors like rapid unplanned urbanization, globalization of unhealthy lifestyles diets and a lack of physical activity. Major risk factors, namely, tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity, lead to metabolic/physiological changes like raised blood pressure, overweight/obesity, raised blood glucose, and higher cholesterol levels (WHO, 2014). Escalating NCDs has been a major cause of concern in Public health research.

The seriousness of these can be seen in the fact that at a global level, 7 out of 10 leading causes of deaths in 2019 were due to NCDs. Also, in 2019, 74% of deaths globally were accounted for due to NCDs. An estimated 32% of all global deaths (17.9 million deaths) were accounted by CVDs in 2019, of which 85% were due to heart attack and stroke. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) has now become the third leading cause of death worldwide, causing 3.23 million deaths in 2019 (WHO Global Health Estimates, 2020). Moreover, the prevalence of global diabetes was estimated to be 9.3% (463 million people), rising to 10.2% (578 million) by 2030 and 10.9% (700 million) by 2045. (IDF Diabetes Atlas Committee, 2019). Cancer, accounting for nearly 10 million deaths in 2020, is steadily becoming one of the leading