

Author's Commentary on Data Published on Cardiovascular Risk Factors of Airport Visitors in India: A Paper Published in 2021

Nilesh Goswami*

Department of Cardiology, Eris Lifesciences Ltd., India

***Corresponding author:** Nilesh Goswami, Department of Cardiology Eris Lifesciences Ltd., Ahmedabad, India

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Introduction and Background

Diabetes and hypertension are two major risk factors for developing cardiovascular disease. In India awareness regarding hypertension and diabetes requires efforts from many stakeholders in health care industry. Eris life sciences Ltd, an Indian pharmaceutical company designed an initiative to address this need of hour. Eight booths were set at various airports and campaign ran through the period of 2019 to 2020. These volunteers' booth was trained to measure blood pressure and random blood sugar level.

The camps were set at the departure hall was found to be suitable for the awareness campaign.

Method and Analysis

In 2021, authors looked in to data collected between August 2019 and March 2022. There were 1, 01,982 participants who had given their consent for collecting their data and analysing later for academic purpose. We found that 1058 subject's data were either incomplete or missing the entries. Also 817 subjects' data was not considered because of their foreign nationality and we were intended to analyse Indian subjects who were visiting airports. While planning for publication, we came to know that all data were collected in anonymous manner and a digital signature was obtained from each participant as a permission from their side to utilize data for research and analysis purpose.

We presented our plan to independent ethics committee based in Chennai and received approval for retrospective study to run the full analysis of the data already collected.

Results

Since this is my short commentary on entire published data, I am covering only important observations we found after analysis of the data. In the total number of observations we analysed, the female participation was 17 % and male were 83 %. Average age of participants were 45.9 ± 12.9 years. As I already described, we excluded data of 817 foreign visitors because our aim was to improve insights for India.

Out of all the findings, the fact that attracted my attention was out of all those participants whose blood sugar level was suggestive of diabetes, when asked about their current treatment, only 44% confirmed that they were being treated for diabetes. Interestingly this means 56% subjects with higher blood glucose value were either unaware or but surely were not taking any treatment. Another finding about the participants who con-

firmed that they were being treated for diabetes, 46% out of them had normal blood glucose value.

Those participants whose blood pressure value was measured to be high, only 11% confirmed that they were taking anti-hypertensive treatment. This again suggest that 89% subjects with higher blood pressure were untreated in airport visitors. Those who reported to be treated for hypertension, 56% among them found to have normal blood pressure measurement value in this screening program.

Above observations suggest that there is a huge gap in treatment. Also, these observations suggest that the subjects who Have access to the treatment are inadequately treated for diabetes and hypertension.

Why airport as site for campaign?

Passengers travelling by air increase from 169 million to 345 million in between 2014 to 2019 In India. India is a diverse country in terms of lifestyle, food, religious practices and income. Airports were primarily targeted to include that population who otherwise has no challenges or less challenges in accessing healthcare facilities. If we can create awareness at upper middle class and economically stable population, we will be able to impact overall treatment rates in our country. Though I agree that this was not 100% confirmed that only rich and economically sound people visit airports but in broader sense this was true. This sounded perfect idea to cater the wider variety of population and making a direct impact by bridging the gap with awareness.

Conclusion

The present retrospective study showed a high prevalence of important cardiovascular risk factors like diabetes and blood pressure. In addition, it was seen that there exists a low level of awareness about their diagnosis of diabetes and hypertension. We have also seen that treatment level for diabetes was higher than that of hypertension (44% vs 11%). These findings not only encourage the policy makers to create such initiatives but also pharmaceutical organizations like Eris to take initiatives and there is huge gap, yet to be bridge exits.

References

1. Cardiovascular risk factors of airport visitors in India: results from a nation-wide campaign. *J Clinical Hypertension*, 2021; 1–9.