

# Biggest killer in India is not a virus

Non-communicable diseases, like diabetes and hypertension, are now responsible for roughly two out of every three deaths. Across 16 states and UTs, at least 10% of the population has such a disease

Since the 1990s, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like hypertension and diabetes have become bigger killers than infectious diseases in India.

In 2017, NCDs killed 6.3 million Indians — about two-thirds of all deaths that year — and India alone accounts for 15.3% of global NCD deaths.

A study of 2 lakh people in 21 states by the Thought Arbitrage Research Institute found that about one in 10 Indians suffers from an NCD, mainly caused by poor lifestyle and environmental conditions.

## Every 4th person in some states has an NCD

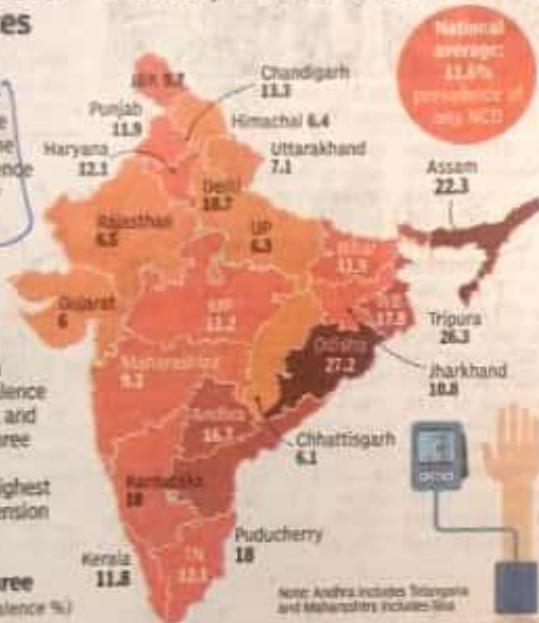
Among the 21 major states covered in the study, Odisha had the highest NCD prevalence (27.2%), followed by Tripura (26.3%) and Assam (22.3%).

Hypertension, digestive diseases and diabetes are the most prevalent NCDs in India. Odisha has the highest prevalence of digestive diseases, and is among the worst three for hypertension. Puducherry has the highest prevalence of hypertension and diabetes.

### Worst states for three biggest NCDs (prevalence %)

HYPERTENSION		DIGESTIVE DISEASE		DIABETES	
State/UT	Prevalence	State/UT	Prevalence	State/UT	Prevalence
Puducherry	11.5	Odisha	15.9	Puducherry	9.3
Odisha	9.4	Tripura	7.6	Tamil Nadu	6.6
Andhra	8.5	Bihar	5.1	Kerala	5.9

State-wise prevalence of NCDs (% of respondents)



## 1 in every 28 Indians has hypertension

Thirty years ago, the five most common diseases in India were communicable, and caused more than half of all deaths. But today, three of the top five causes of death in India are NCDs.

### Most prevalent NCDs in India (% of respondents)



## Urban men at highest risk

Overall, men are more likely to suffer from an NCD, particularly diabetes and heart disease, but hypertension is more common among women.

### Prevalence of NCDs by gender (% of respondents)



## Common in rural areas too

NCDs are only marginally less prevalent in rural areas, despite more active lifestyles and better environmental conditions.

### Prevalence of NCD by location (% of respondents)



## Risk multiplies with age

The risk of metabolic illness, like diabetes or hypertension, increases four-fold from 25 to 35 years of age, and three-fold from 35 to 45 years. For critical NCDs like heart disease, cancer and respiratory disease, the risk doubles from age 35 to 45.

### Prevalence of NCDs by age group (% of respondents)

Disease	Below 15	15-25	25-35	35-45	45-55	60+
Diabetes	0.2%	0.4	1.3	4.1	8.5	11
Respiratory disease	0.4%	0.4	1.2	2.1	3.5	8
Hypertension	0.1%	0.5	2.2	5.1	9.3	15.5
Brain/neurological	0.5%	0.6	1.1	1.9	2.4	3.9
Digestive	0.5%	1.2	3.5	5.7	6.4	7.4

Poor air quality is the biggest risk factor for NCDs with a prevalence rate of 76% among Indians, followed by low physical activity (66.5% prevalence), poor diets (55% prevalence of low legume intake, for instance), and high stress (44% prevalence).