

Special Supplement on ENDOCRINOLOGY



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Editorial



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Endocrinology : Scientific and societal

Endocrine disorders like diabetes, hypothyroidism and osteoporosis are widely prevalent. But these disorders very commonly remain undiagnosed and undertreated. The current issue of Journal of Indian Medical Association endeavors to increase awareness about these very common but neglected conditions.

Osteoporosis is a leading public health concern. Hip fractures, one of the most common variety of osteoporotic fracture, has a reported 1-year mortality as high as 58%. But the grim reality remains that many of the elderly patients who sustain osteoporotic fractures do not receive treatment for osteoporosis. At other times, they get treated with ineffective agents like calcitonin which has fallen into disfavor due to concerns regarding malignancy. The right perspective to approach a patient with osteoporosis is discussed in the article on osteoporosis. Vitamin D deficiency is another global public health problem and contributes partly to development of osteoporosis. Hypovitaminosis D can be treated by several doses and regimens but overzealous correction has also lead to the increased incidence of hypercalcemia and acute kidney injury. The article on Vitamin D deficiency in Indian context highlights the issues concerning diagnosis and management of this common clinical condition.

Primary hypothyroidism is another prevalent and mismanaged clinical condition. The treatment of this condition with thyroxine replacement though supposedly a straight forward proposition, it remains under or overtreated in almost 50% of patients as shown by studies. Besides, there are important differences in diagnosis and management of hypothyroidism in elderly population, that has been aptly elaborated in the article on hypothyroidism in elderly population. Hyperthyroidism represents the other spectrum of thyroid related disorders. The clinical presentation and treatment pattern in Indian setting has been elucidated in the observational study published in the issue.

The ever increasing burden of diabetes and its complications is not only a huge challenge for the affected individual and the treating physician but also for the society in general. Appropriate dietary approaches can prevent diabetes and there are early and encouraging signals that these may even reverse it in the initial stages. These preliminary findings require the rigorous scrutiny of clinical trials before they can be accepted as high quality scientific evidence. A controversial area in management of diabetes and obesity is use of artificial sweeteners. The review on artificial sweeteners critically analyzes scientific evidence regarding their usage. The editors are thankful to the team of eminent doctors for publishing the consensus statement on diabetic neuropathy in the current issue. The article on risk factors of diabetic nephropathy throws light on another common complication of diabetes. Early identification of these risk factors can prevent this grave complication. Cardiovascular mortality still accounts for two-thirds of death in diabetes and the recently published positive cardiovascular outcome trials might play a role in selection of the appropriate glucose lowering agent.

On the ever expanding horizon of medical information and the rising expectations from our fraternity, it is an appropriate endeavor for JIMA to dedicate this issue to Endocrinology. We hope our readers shall cherish reading the articles.