World Kidney Day 2023: Kidney Health for All – Preparing for the Unexpected, Supporting the Vulnerable: Are We Well Prepared?

The menace of kidney diseases including chronic kidney disease (CKD) has taken more than 850 million people worldwide in its grip. In India, the prevalence of CKD cannot be accessed accurately but it has been reported to be 17.2% by Screening and Early Evaluation of Kidney Disease study. The recent pandemic has proved that CKD patients are more vulnerable to the deadly coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The third world and other developing countries are even more vulnerable because of risk factors like poverty, poor sanitation, pollutants, water contamination, overcrowding and increasing incidence of hypertension and diabetes. The burden of diabetes is high and increasing globally, particularly in developing economies like India. The estimates in 2019 showed that 77 million individuals had diabetes in India, which is expected to rise to over 134 million by 2045.

World Kidney Day is an annual global campaign that aims to raise awareness about the importance of kidney health and the role of kidneys in our overall health. The theme for World Kidney Day 2023 (9th March, 2023) is “Preparing for the unexpected, support the vulnerable!”, which emphasizes the need to support people who are at risk of kidney disease and those who have already been diagnosed. In India, the campaign is more critical than ever, given the high burden of kidney disease in the country. It is expected that most people in India are not aware that they have kidney disease, and the disease often goes undiagnosed until it has reached an advanced stage. In this article, we share our views on different policy changes which are needed to fulfil the theme of World Kidney Day 2023.
invest in research and development of new treatments and vaccines that can be quickly deployed in the event of a pandemic. This will require sustained investment in the scientific community to ensure that researchers have the necessary resources to develop effective treatments and vaccines.

Promote public health education: Public health education and awareness are essential in managing a pandemic. Governments and health care organizations should invest in public health education campaigns to educate people about the risks and symptoms of a pandemic, as well as measures they can take to protect themselves and others. This includes basic hygiene practices, such as hand washing, social distancing and wearing masks.

How can we support the vulnerable?

We propose “EACH” concept for supporting the vulnerable in India (Fig. 2). “EACH” stands for Education, Alliance, Collaboration and Health Equity.

To support these vulnerable groups, it is essential to raise awareness about kidney disease and its risk factors. This can include educating the public about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, regular kidney function testing, and early detection and management of chronic illnesses.
Interdepartmental alliances are necessary for better understanding of illness and early detection of kidney disease. Public-private partnership (PPP) will also bolster the capacity of health care facilities and help in the early diagnosis and prompt treatment of such illnesses. Kidney-noncommunicable disease (NCD) collaboration will help support the vulnerable patients. National standards should be framed for NCD care and reporting. Also, research and finance would be the integral part of NCD care.

Health equity is necessary for accessible health care facilities and better service delivery. Training health care professionals at primary health care centers and community health care centers would help in achieving this goal. Financing the underprivileged will help in maintaining equity and should be promoted by PPP models.

In addition, there is a need to increase access to health care, particularly in rural areas where the burden of kidney disease is higher. This can include the expansion of telemedicine services and the training of health care professionals to provide specialized care for kidney disease.

In conclusion, we should be well prepared for the next pandemic and strengthen our health care system, develop and maintain pandemic preparedness plans, invest in research and focus on international collaboration. To support the vulnerable, the “EACH” concept is worth implementing.

REFERENCES