

# A Guide to Transgender on Non-Communicable Diseases

Vijetha B. V.<sup>1</sup> and Usha Ravindra<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>ICSSR Post Doctoral Fellow: (F.N.3-126/2021-22/PDG/GEN).

<sup>2</sup>Senior Scientist, AICRP (Women in Agriculture) GKVK, UAS, Bengaluru.

\*Corresponding Author: [vijetha.bv@gmail.com](mailto:vijetha.bv@gmail.com)

Adequate nutrition is of paramount importance during all the stages of life and life cannot be sustained without adequate nourishment. A wide range of nutrients are required by human beings to lead a healthy and active life. The amount of each nutrient that is required by human being depend upon age, sex, physical activity and physiological status.

The life expectancy has increased tremendously. Immunization, health facilities and mixed diet intake has generally made a mark in health and life expectancy of people. The new technologies and development have eased the physical work stress for some and increased the non-communicable disease level associated with urban lifestyles such as obesity.

The changing scenario shall be the double burden of malnutrition encompassing both the ends of under nutrition and over nutrition. The major cause of death shall be due to degenerative and chronic diseases.

The driving factors are general lack of physical activities, poverty, globalization, the adoption of western dietary pattern, limiting to few food items, high dose of preservatives, salt and also due to commercialization of food by aggressive advertising.

Poor nutrition at early age will have impact on reduced growth and body mass, metabolic adaptation that modifies the way nutrients get absorbed in the body. The situation later may lead to increased risk of diabetes, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, cancer, chronic lung diseases, mental health conditions, injuries are collectively responsible for 74% deaths worldwide (WHO report 2022).

Tobacco use, physical inactivity, the harmful use of alcohol and unhealthy diets all increase the risk of dying from NCD's. Chronic non-communicable diseases are the number one cause of death and disability in the world.

Transgender community are neglected at every stage of medical treatment. Government has

many awareness programs and health facilities for communicable diseases for transgenders but for non-communicable diseases diagnosis and treatment are still under nascent stage needs proper protocol for free health assessment.

Non communicable diseases among transgender are on raise due to many reasons, most of the transgender work as sexual workers, they are working in odd hours with hormonal imbalance, alcohol addictions, smoking and unhealthy eating habits. Among transgender we don't find any differences in their behaviour, sex and social participation in the initial years of life, but over the years there will be slowly behavioural changes which makes them socio-physiologically and emotionally detached. Most of the time they will be thrown out of family making them highly vulnerable for food, nutrition and socio-psychological support. This is leading to chronic non-communicable diseases and medical expenses may be more, due to financial constraint proper treatment is not possible and this results in premature death.

**Table 1: Dietary modifications that can be adopted for balanced nutrition and health**

Food items	Replace with
Poori	chapati
Fried samosa	baked samosa
Fried cutlet	tawa cutlet
kababs	sambar form/stir fried
Maida paratha	Whole wheat roti
Sweets	dry fruits
Juices/soda	whole fruits
pastries/bakery foods	fruits/vegetable salad/boiled-channa/panner burji

Therefore, there is an urgent need for transgenders to be aware of importance of health and non- drug measures which include decreasing physical inactivity, eating a healthy diet, e.g., Eating protein rich foods, intake of more fibrous foods, avoiding salt and sugar consumption, limiting

processed foods intake, stress management, avoidance of tobacco products, moderation in alcohol intake and early detection of disease related symptoms. Restricting restaurant food intake or having good options for eating out side for regular food and being active whole day will have a better impact on health. Searching for alternative livelihood apart from sexual worker will have larger benefits in terms of emotional and hormonal balance.

Adopting yoga and meditation will help in mind body and spiritual connection which can also help in stress management and decision-making capacities.

Thus, having a holistic approach to life will have less burden physiologically, financially and mentally. Corrections of habits and right nutritional awareness are important for treatment of NCD's. Few dietary modifications that can be adopted for balanced nutrition and health is given in Table 1.

Avoiding high calorie foods, deep fried foods and packed foods. Choosing more serving of vegetables, proteins and low-fat foods in diet is the key to be healthy and disease free. Meditation, yoga and exercise will benefit for overall health and wellbeing.

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