

## Sustainable Development and the Battle against Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and the crucial role that sustainable development can play in addressing this global health challenge.

Non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases, are responsible for a considerable proportion of global morbidity and mortality. Beyond the personal toll on individuals and families, the economic burden of treating and managing NCDs is staggering. It places strain on healthcare systems, hinders workforce productivity, and exacerbates existing social inequalities.<sup>[1]</sup>

NCDs, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory diseases, pose a significant threat to public health worldwide. According to the World Health Organization, NCDs are responsible for nearly 71% of all global deaths. The impact of NCDs extends beyond individual health, affecting economies and healthcare systems, thereby hindering sustainable development efforts.<sup>[2]</sup>

Sustainable development, with its focus on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, provides a framework for addressing the root causes of NCDs.<sup>[3]</sup> Here are a few key points highlighting the intersection of sustainable development and NCDs:

**1. Prevention through Environmental Sustainability:** Sustainable development emphasizes environmental conservation. By promoting clean air, water, and sustainable food systems, we can mitigate environmental factors that contribute to NCDs, such as air pollution, water contamination, and poor nutrition.<sup>[4]</sup>

**2. Healthier Lifestyles and Education:** Sustainable development encourages education and awareness. Through public health campaigns and education programs, individuals can be empowered to adopt healthier lifestyles, including regular exercise, balanced diets, and avoidance of harmful substances like tobacco and excessive alcohol.<sup>[5]</sup>

**3. Equitable Access to Healthcare:** Sustainable development goals include ensuring good health and well-being for all. Efforts to provide equitable access to healthcare services, including preventive measures and treatment for NCDs, are essential for achieving these goals.<sup>[2,3]</sup>

**4. Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Sustainable development relies on the active participation of communities. Engaging communities in healthcare decision-making processes, creating supportive environments,

and fostering social cohesion can positively impact health outcomes and reduce the prevalence of NCDs.<sup>[2-4]</sup>

**5. Innovation and Research:** Sustainable development encourages innovation and research. Investing in research on NCDs, their risk factors, and preventive measures can lead to the development of effective interventions and healthcare strategies.<sup>[6]</sup>

In conclusion, the relationship between sustainable development and NCDs is intricate and interconnected. By incorporating health considerations into sustainable development initiatives and vice versa, we can create a holistic approach that addresses the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health.

I urge policymakers, healthcare professionals, and the public to recognize the importance of integrating strategies for NCD prevention and management within the broader framework of sustainable development. Together, we can build healthier and more resilient communities, fostering a future where individuals can thrive without the burden of preventable non-communicable diseases.

### Acknowledgments

The author is extremely grateful to the referenced authors for their invaluable research, which allowed me to compile the conclusions presented in this letter to the editor.

### Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

**Ram Kumar Garg**

*Department of Community Health Nursing, Teerthanker Mahaveer University, College of Nursing, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, India*

*Address for correspondence: Dr. Ram Kumar Garg, Department of Community Health Nursing, Teerthanker Mahaveer University, College of Nursing, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, India. E-mail: ram.nursing@tmu.ac.in*

**Received:** 09 Dec 23 **Accepted:** 14 Dec 23

**Published:** 17 Jul 24

### References

1. Ramesh S, Kosalram K. The burden of non-communicable diseases: A scoping review focus on the context of India. *J Educ Health Promot* 2023;12:41.
2. World Health Organization. Noncommunicable Diseases. World Health Organization; 2023. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases>. [Last accessed on 2023 Dec 09].

3. NCDs and Sustainable Development. NCD Alliance. 2015. Available from: <https://ncdalliance.org/why-ncds/ncds-and-sustainable-development>. [Last accessed on 2023 Dec 09].
4. Frumkin H, Haines A. Global environmental change and non-communicable disease risks. *Ann Rev Public Health* 2019;40:261-82.
5. United Nations. Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. United Nations. United Nations; 2015. Available from: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>. [Last accessed on 2023 Dec 09].
6. Budreviciute A, Damiati S, Sabir DK, Onder K, Schuller-Goetzburg P, Plakys G, *et al.* Management and prevention strategies for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and their risk factors. *Front Public Health* 2020;8:574111.

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online	
<p><b>Quick Response Code:</b></p> 	<p><b>Website:</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.ijpvmjournal.net/www.ijpm.ir">www.ijpvmjournal.net/www.ijpm.ir</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>DOI:</b></p> <p>10.4103/ijpvm.ijpvm_334_23</p>

**How to cite this article:** Garg RK. Sustainable development and the battle against non-communicable diseases (NCDs). *Int J Prev Med* 2024;15:21.

© 2024 International Journal of Preventive Medicine | Published by Wolters Kluwer - Medknow