

Diabetes leading cause of city deaths over 8 yrs: NGO report

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Mumbai: Diabetes is the leading cause of deaths in Mumbai, with fatalities rising steadily over the past decade. From 2014 to 2022, diabetes claimed 91,318 lives, including 14,207 in 2022 alone, up from 2,544 in 2014, according to a report titled 'Status of Health Issues in Mumbai' by Praja Foundation. The report also attributes 79,384 deaths to respiratory illnesses, linked to deteriorating air quality, while tuberculosis claimed 45,676 lives in the same period.

The NGO has urged implementation of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) urban planning guidelines to reduce non-communicable diseases like diabetes. The guidelines recommend at least 10 sq mt open space per person to support public health, physical activity, and well-being. "Mumbai's Development Plan (2014-2034) proposes only 3 sq mt of open space per person — a stark shortfall that highlights urgent need for more open spaces," said Praja's CEO Milind Mhaske.

Dr Rajiv Kovil, state secretary for the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India, said diabetes death figures are "just the tip of the iceberg". "Deaths not directly attributed to high blood sugar, such as those caused by infections where diabetes plays a role, are not counted," he said.

He added that diabetes is a lifestyle-related disorder, and both, its incidence and mortality, could be controlled. Dr Kovil has been advocating for policy-level changes to make unhealthy foods more expensive through tax-

RESPIRATORY ILLS & TB NUMBERS ALSO CHUNKY

Silent Killer: Diabetes Tops List in Mumbai

➤ Affects heart, kidneys, nerves; 91k deaths (2014-23)

2023 | Over 45,000 cases in public health facilities; 14k deaths in 2022

3.7 Lakh
cases in
10 yrs

High cases | Wards A (11,116), R/S (15,035), C (7,576)

Sharp rise from 2022-23 | H/W (320%), K/W (52%), S (54%)

➤ Praja recommends more open spaces in accordance to DP 14-34: 3 sq/m open space per person

Other disease that plague Mumbaikars

➤ Diarrhoea topped list for caseload with 9.3 lakh in last decade followed by TB (3.9 lakh), dengue (1.4 lakh)

➤ Leading causes of death (2014-22): include respiratory illnesses (79k), TB (45k) hypertension (41k)

➤ City records 1.6k dengue deaths, 903 malaria deaths in 10 years

tion and to ensure that healthier alternatives are available at reasonable prices.

The report also highlights critical gaps in the city's healthcare infrastructure, noting that although the health budget increased by 98% over past six years, certain longstanding issues remain unaddressed. For example, MoHUA's Urban & Regional Development Plans Formulation & Implementation guidelines recommend one dispensary per



Mumbai's Declining Air Quality and Health Impact

➤ Air quality dropped from Satisfactory (51-100 AQI) in 2019 to Moderate (101-200 AQI) by 2022

➤ 2023 saw no months with Good AQI (0-50), signalling worsening pollution levels

➤ Report correlated 33.7k respiratory disease death and 13.5k respiratory TB deaths to worsening aqi

15,000 people, but there is only one public dispensary for every 40,143 Mumbaikars.

The city requires 838 dispensaries, the report notes, but there are only 313 such facilities available. The report also flagged an urgent need for additional facilities in the eastern suburbs where 51% of the population lives in slums. However, most dispensaries, including BMC's flagship Aapla Dawakhana, are concentrated in the city and western sub-

Praja recommendations to Improve Mumbai's Healthcare

➤ Follow NBC and URDPFI norms to ensure accessible, well-staffed BMC dispensaries open 7 am-10 pm

➤ Hold BMC Health Committee meetings with data-driven discussions on high-impact diseases

urbs, where 24% and 43% of the respective population lives in slums.

Civic health officials disputed the report findings. "An assessment is done for the need for dispensaries or Aapla Dawakhana and facilities are created accordingly. We also need to understand that private clinics exist in slum areas. If there are existing health facilities in use, we cannot build additional clinics there," a civic health official said.