Putting NCDs at the forefront of women & children's health



Language English



Katie Dain, NCDA CEO, speaking at an NCD Café Session at 2018 FIGO World Congress

Over the last three decades, women's health challenges in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) have

dramatically changed. Once considered diseases of affluence, today, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – including cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and mental and neurological conditions – are the leading causes of death and disability among women in developing and developed countries alike.

> Women in LMICs often face a triple burden of poor health, resulting from reproductive and maternal health conditions, communicable diseases, and NCDs.

In settings constrained by poverty, limited health infrastructure and human-resource capacity, and gender inequality, women are far less likely to access timely, adequate or affordable diagnosis and care. As a result, these diseases are often detected at a late stage, increasing the likelihood of disability and largely preventable, premature death.

Exposure to common risk factors for NCDs – including physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, tobacco and harmful alcohol use, and both indoor and outdoor pollution – have dramatic consequences for women and children. Additionally, maternal health conditions are often an early determinant of risk for acquiring an NCD and for the future health of a woman's children. Common risk factors for NCDs, like hypertension and hyperglycaemia, can lead to serious complications during pregnancy and have long-lasting effects.

NCD Café sessions at 2018 World FIGO Congress, taking place in Rio (Brazil), focused on:

- lifecourse aproach to women's health
- early life opportunities
- diabetes in pregnancy
- reducing all forms of malnutrition
- eliminating cervical cancer
- building the health workfoce for NCDs

Sessions explored the opportunities for integrated NCD and maternal health services for women and girls, and discussed co-benefit solutions, as well as highlighted the opportunities presented by the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for action.

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Tag feed: women [4]

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[4] https://ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/130