

COMBATING NCDs in India

SUBMITTED BY JOHN SNOW, INC

DR. ATUL PAVNIKAR is a Non-communicable Disease (NCD) Medical Officer working at an NCD Clinic in the Indore District Hospital in Indore, India. He has 20 years of experience working in health service, with 10 of those years spent at the District Hospital. He has worked at the NCD Clinic since it opened in 2015. Over the course of his career, Dr. Pavnikaar has seen the positive impact of preventive care in relation to NCDs. However, due to resource constraints at the NCD Clinic, he rarely has the time or resources to provide prevention services to his patients. "We don't prevent NCDs, we only treat."

The biggest constraint is limited staff time. The clinic has three staff that serve a catchment area of approximately 500,000 people. While the clinic operates at typical hours, Dr. Pavnikaar and his colleagues routinely work many hours of overtime to meet the demand for NCD services.

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With this high workload, the clinic staff do not have enough time to both treat patients for NCDs and provide preventative care. Even routine screenings such as height and weight check-ins are uncommon, due to the limited time the staff has to see each patient.

To help address the resource shortages, Dr. Pavnikaar recommends introducing an NCD counselor to the clinic that can focus more on prevention and the continuum of care with each patient. This would remove some of the workload from the doctors at the NCD clinic, and allow for increased NCD screenings. Home screenings and outreach programs could also expand the reach of prevention services, and strengthen linkages between the NCD Clinic and the community.

