

FREE VASCULAR AWARENESS CAMP TO CONCLUDE TOMORROW

PROF (COL) KUMUD RAI

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) afflicts 10-20% of general population above 50 years of age in the West and is a leading cause of death and disability (amputation, paralysis). The Chennai Urban Population Study estimated the prevalence of PAD in India as 3%; this was 6.3% in diabetics. PAD causes pain in the legs on walking; the pain is typically relieved by taking rest. This pain is often attributed to 'arthritis' or 'sciatica' and inappropriately treated. As the condition worsens, the patient may suffer from continuous pain in the foot, or develop wounds which may not heal. In the last stage the foot becomes black (gangrene) and the leg may have to be cut off (amputated). This tragic situation is preventable if the condition is detected and treated in time.

PAD typically affects males above 50 years of age. The single most important risk factor is smoking. It is common amongst diabetics, those suffering from high blood pressure, heart disease, or those having high cholesterol (abnormal lipid profile). It sometimes runs in families.

For a person with suspected PAD, con-

sultation with vascular surgeon is mandatory. Fortunately PAD can be detected by a simple test - the ankle/brachial index (ABI) - which is the comparison of blood pressure of legs and arms. Other investigations include Ultrasound Color Doppler, MR angiography (MRA), CT Angiography or Digital subtraction angiography (DSA).

PAD can be treated by medication, peripheral bypass surgery, or angioplasty. Correct treatment prevents untimely death and limb loss, and improves the quality of life. Early PAD is treated with cessation of smoking, regular exercise, weight reduction, good control of hypertension and diabetes, low-dose aspirin, and statins. If symptoms are severe then peripheral bypass surgery or angioplasty/stenting is required to save the limb from amputation.

To create awareness regarding PAD amongst general public, MaxSuperspecialityHospital, Saket, is conducting a 'Vascular Awareness Camp'. The camp started on June 11 and will conclude tomorrow (June 19). Free ABI test and complimentary consultation with vascular surgeon is being offered at the camp. Positive patients will be treated at endovascular workshop on June 28.

The author is Director Vascular Surgery, Max Heart & Vascular Institute.