Managing Diabetes an Expensive Affair
by R. AVADHANI on MARCH 24, 2014

The economic burden of diagnosed diabetes in the US is $245 billion per year while in India it is $5 billion. Approximately, $12.5 billion is spent on diabetes among all age groups in Texas annually. Diabetes is increasing at rapid rate and it is expected that by 2030, India will have 100 million people with diabetes.

While diabetes may be treatable in future, currently there is no known cure. Among several treatments, dietary adjustments, exercise and blood glucose monitoring, is crucial. Hence, finding way to reduce risk from diabetes not only makes sense from a humanistic point of view but also economically.

Obesity leads to Diabetes

Participating in a two-day international conference on bitter gourd held at Icrisat, Dr. Bhimanagouda Patil, Director, Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center (VFIC), Texas A&M University, suggested a systems-wide approach which needs to be implemented by the interdisciplinary researchers involved from ‘farm to consumers’. Both obesity and diabetes are closely linked and led to investigations of obesity-associated insulin resistance to the development of type-2 diabetes. To some extent, obesity led to diabetes and partially due to fast food and sedentary lifestyle, he added.

Stating that some complications may be addressed through approaches involving health promoting properties from vegetables, exercise, and lifestyle, Dr. Bhimangoda Patil said that currently Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center is using this approach for other vegetables and fruits to increase consumption and in turn reduce risk from chronic disease.

In order to accomplish the system-wide approach, scientists from production agriculture, breeding, nutrition, food science, medical sciences, natural product chemistry, pharmacology, micro-biota and extension educations have initiated a strategy to be involved in translational part to benefit the consumers.

“We are trying to have partnerships with several countries including Germany, Indian Universities, Taiwan, Philippines and Tanzania as well as private sectors to develop strategy to enhance values of bitter gourd as vegetable to improve human health specifically reducing risk from diabetes,” Dr Bhimangouda Patil told The Hindu.

ORIGINAL LINK: