

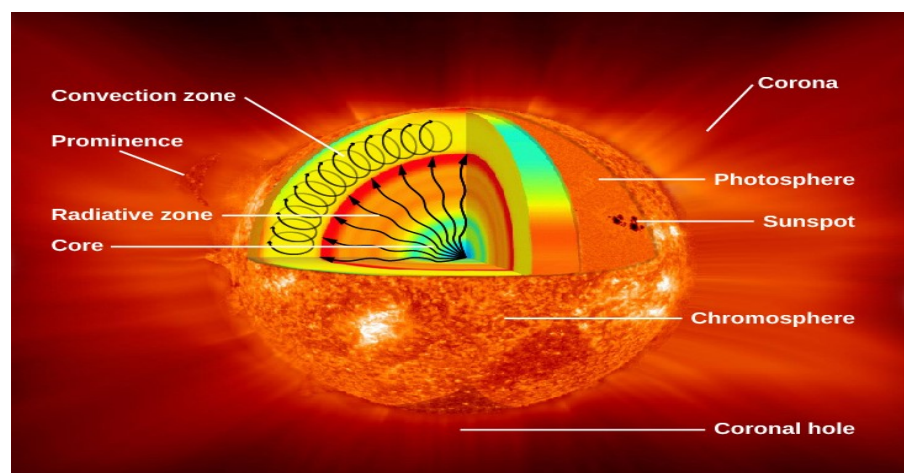
Study on Cardiovascular Diseases and Cancer

Why in news?

A study by the Prospective Urban and Rural Epidemiologic (PURE) on cardiovascular diseases was recently published online in The Lancet journal.

What are the major findings?

- The study analysed the situation in 21 countries across 5 continents, categorised by income levels.
- **CVD** - Household air pollution has emerged as one of the key causes of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs).
- 12% of all CVDs in low-income countries are attributable to household air pollution.
- Hypertension is the largest risk factor for CVD in low-income countries including India.
- This is followed by high non-HDL cholesterol and household air pollution.
- Besides medical reasons, the single largest risk factor for cardiovascular diseases is low education level.
- **Deaths** - CVD remains the leading cause of mortality among middle-aged adults globally.
- However, this is no longer the case in high-income countries, where cancer is now responsible for twice as many deaths as CVD.
- In high-income countries, people have started living longer, so deaths due to CVD have reduced, and more are now dying due to cancers.



What does it mean for India?

- In low-income countries, including India, CVD is still the top killer.
- Deaths due to CVD here are three times more frequent than that due to cancer.
- Household air pollution is a greater risk factor for CVD in India than diabetes, tobacco use, low physical activity and poor diet.
- An earlier report from a PURE study showed that Indians had the lowest lung function among the 21 countries studied.
- At least 65% of homes in India use biomass fuel for cooking and heating.
- In urban areas, the use of mosquito coils, dhoop sticks and agarbattis contribute to high household air pollution.
- Household air pollution is becoming an important cause of overall and cardiovascular mortality in low-income countries.
- In other words, if the household air pollution is controlled, there will be a significant decrease in mortality including due to cardiovascular disease in India.

1. Finland	6. Costa Rica
2. Denmark	7. Norway
3. Iceland	8. Israel
4. Sweden	9. Luxembourg
5. Netherlands	10. Mexico

What does the report imply?

- The risk burden of CVD-linked mortality is inversely proportional - lower risk but higher mortality in low-income countries, and higher risk but lower mortality in high-income countries.
- PURE's analysis concluded that the higher mortality in poorer countries was likely due to other factors.
- These primarily include 'lower quality and less health care'.
- Access to affordable, quality health care is still not ensured in many regions in India.
- A great amount of out-of-pocket expenditure frustrates continuation of treatment, or adherence to drug routine.
- According to Health Ministry data for 2014-15, nearly 62.6% of India's total health expenditure is out-of-pocket expenditure.

What is the way forward?

- Targeting risk factors is key to reducing deaths due to cardiovascular diseases.
- The major focus so far has been ambient air pollution i.e. pollution rising from motor vehicles and industries.
- It is now time to wake up and realise that the pollution generated in house is also responsible for significant adverse effects.
- Besides, the Centre's Ayushman Bharat Yojana will have to take much of the burden of hospitalisation for complications of non-communicable diseases.
- National and State schemes running on mission mode will have to step up efforts to target people at risk with life-saving interventions.
- These include the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, CVD and Stroke.
- Any plans targeting the risk factors of non-communicable diseases will have to be truly game-changing, and incorporate the environmental angle as well.

Source: Indian Express, The Hindu

