

A CALL TO ACTION

Beyond Reproductive Years

Adults over 60 comprise the fastest growing age group today, yet health data for this demographic are rarely available. More robust data around Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and accessibility of essential medicines and technologies are needed to monitor global targets and national policies addressing NCDs in women of all ages, specifically among post-menopausal women. Following menopause, women are increasingly vulnerable to common NCDs – cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and mental health conditions – and are often at greater risk of disability associated with these conditions.

SCREENING for NCDs

NCDs become more common as women age, making comprehensive NCD screening an important aspect of routine healthcare visits. Exposure to common risk factors over time, including tobacco and alcohol use, physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and air pollution can increase the likelihood of developing an NCD later in life. Routine screenings depend on each individual's risk, but can include screenings for elevated blood pressure, diabetes, and common cancers, among others.

CANCERS

As women age, they are at higher risk of developing several types of cancer, including breast and endometrial cancer.

HEART DISEASE

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among adult women. Lack of attention to women's risk of developing heart disease can result in increased fatalities and debilitating side effects.



DIABETES

Women over the age of 45 are at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Adequate nutritional intake and attention to age and ability-appropriate physical activity can help mitigate these risks.



MENTAL and NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

Depression, neurocognitive disorders, and dementia are among the most common mental health conditions in older adults, and women comprise the majority of patients with these conditions. Preventative factors for developing such conditions include a healthy diet, physical and cognitive activity, and controlling cardiovascular risk factors such as diabetes, high cholesterol, and hypertension.

TREATMENT for NCDs

Having a chronic condition like diabetes or hypertension increases the likelihood that an individual will need sustained medical attention, care, and access to affordable medicines and technologies to manage these conditions.

PALLIATIVE CARE

Integration of palliative care with NCD management is an essential component of providing high quality care for people living with NCDs. Older women living with NCDs can suffer in silence, often due to stigma and discrimination associated with age, and the common misconception that living with an NCD is a part of old-age. Integrated palliative care can help promote and maintain the dignity of women living with NCDs, and coupled with specialised care, can be tailored to meet the complex needs of older women.

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WOMEN and Noncommunicable Diseases

Noncommunicable 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. Tackling NCDs is central to achieving our global development goals and targets, and to ensuring gender equity, socio-economic well-being and healthy lives for all.

WE CALL for the **INTEGRATION OF NCD prevention, treatment and control** into existing health programmes and services for HIV/AIDS and along the entire RMNCAH continuum.

WE ADVOCATE for **UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC)**, along with **comprehensive programmes** to address the social determinants of health, to ensure improved health and development outcomes for women and girls of all ages.

WE ADVOCATE for a **GENDER-BASED APPROACH** to **NCD prevention and control**, to ensure health programmes, policies and systems are refined and strengthened to be gender-responsive.



Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4

By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from NCDs through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being.

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