

In a survey among the 2000 registrants for the conclave, 99.5% respondents said Air Pollution is hazardous to our health. 96.9% respondents said that the Government should prioritize the health of the citizens by ensuring clean air for all as we recover from COVID-19.

During the conclave, **Dr. Maria Neira**, Director, Public Health, Environment and Social Determinants of Health Department (PHE), World Health Organization, said: *“As a health professional, I have seen first hand what air pollution does to our bodies, to our lungs, and to our brains. Polluted air, largely caused by the burning of fossil fuels, affects almost all major organs in our bodies. It is responsible for the premature death of over 1 million Indians every year, and brings huge healthcare costs to Indian families and the economy. Health professionals have a duty of care, and they take up a trusted position in society. That is why I’m so excited to see Doctors for Clean Air grow so fast, to over 200,000 doctors across the country, adding thousands of trusted voices to our race for a cleaner and healthier India.”*

Dr. Bakul Parekh, President, Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) in his address has said that *“Air pollution leading to lower IQ, stunted growth, lower physical growth, increased obesity. Health professionals must come together to address air pollution as a priority for collective concerted action. For the millions of children exposed to breathing polluted air there is little time to waste and so much to gain from Clean Air.”*

Presidents of 7 specialty national medical associations, representing over 130,000 Doctors, shared research linking air pollution and health and asked fellow medical professionals to take the lead to advocate for clean air and ask citizens and policymakers to ensure Clean Air for All for a healthy and productive India.

Air Pollution causes over 7 million premature deaths across the world, with 1.2 million people in India alone. Long term exposure to indoor and ambient (outdoor) air pollution in the country is found to be linked to nearly 5 million deaths from non-communicable diseases like stroke, diabetes, heart attack, lung cancer, chronic lung diseases. (State of Global Air 2019 published by Health Effects Institute). Recent research evidence from across the world also suggests a strong link between air pollution and COVID-19 communicable disease. A study conducted by Harvard University in the United States¹ highlighted that every one $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ increase in PM_{2.5} is associated with an 8% increase in the COVID-19 death rate. People living in polluted areas are found more vulnerable to SARS-CoV-2 infection. A strong correlation² was observed between the increased concentration of PM_{2.5}, Carbon monoxide (CO), Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) & higher mortality rates in Italy & the US.

Quotes of the Presidents of National Medical Associations:

Alpesh Gandhi,

President, Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI)

“Air pollution can’t be eliminated completely but we can protect ourselves. Air pollution is something we can learn about. Lifestyle and environment play a significant role in pregnancy”

Dr. D.J. Christopher,

President, Indian Chest Society (ICS)

“Air pollution causing climate change has not had the expected impact on mankind, changing the

narrative to its impact on health could be the game changer!”

Dr. Mrinal Kanti Das,

President, Cardiological Society of India (CSI)

"Let us pledge for the free flow of clean air and let the billion hearts beat with the free flow of clean blood"

Dr. Pramod Pal,

President, Indian Academy of Neurology (IAN)

"Air Pollution increases the higher chances of having many neurological disorders especially neurodegenerative disorders such as Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. It also increases atherosclerosis, stroke, depression in elderly and neurodevelopmental disorders in children. We need to reduce air pollution by increasing awareness among people and regulatory agencies. Thus, will give us a brighter and healthy future."

Poorvaprabha Patil,

President, Medical Students Association of India (MSAI)

“As a young healthcare professional, I firmly believe that our responsibility lies beyond treating ailments and encompasses ensuring good health of our communities and preventing diseases- and access to clean air is central to that. The health sector has a key role to play in leading the movement not only by motivating and mobilizing masses to take action but also by propelling systemic changes in legislation and driving social accountability for 'clean air for good health'.”

Arvind Kumar,

Founder and Manager Trustee of the Lung Care Foundation & Past President of Association of Surgeons of India

"Air Pollution not only has long-term health impacts on us but also makes people living in the polluted city more vulnerable to infectious diseases such as COVID-19 by reducing their immunity and damaging their organs. We must focus on having clean air for the health and wellbeing of our citizens and future generations."

About Doctors For Clean Air:

"Doctors for Clean Air" (DFCA), an initiative by [Lung Care Foundation](#) and [Health Care Without Harm](#), is a network of identified, passionate and informed Doctors who are leading the fight against Air Pollution in their respective regions across India. To know more about DFCA

visit: www.dfca.org.in

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