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Dhaka slum dwellers at high risk of NCDs: study

Slum dwellers in Dhaka are at high risk of suffering from non-communicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular ailment, said a recent study.

An icddr,b project titled ‘Strengthening Health, Applying Research Evidence: SHARE’, supported by the European Union, conducted the study recently while the findings were shared at a programme held at icddr,b in Dhaka on Wednesday.

James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University and department of public health and informatics of BSMMU collaborated with the project.

The researchers prepared the report based on the questionnaires answered by a total of 2,551 residents, aged between 10 to 64 years, of Bauniabadh slum in capital’s Mirpur.

Among them, a total of 2,009 participated in the subsequent physical and biochemical measurements.

According to the study, the prevalence of diabetes was 15.6 per cent in men and 22.5 per cent in women which was much higher than the estimated national prevalence 7 per cent.

39.2 per cent women and 18.9 per cent men living in Bauniabadh slum suffered obesity while 21 per cent men and 7.1 per cent women were underweight. The occurrence of hypertension was 18.6 per cent among men and 20.7 per cent among women, said the study.

Researchers said that the common belief that only riches suffer from NCDs had been shaken by the shocking findings.

They also said that the aim of the study was to describe prevalence of NCD risk factors among urban poor.

A total of 2,986 eligible households of the slum with one eligible individual were selected by simple random sampling stratified by household wealth status, added the study report.

BSMMU research officer Fahmina Afroz Khan said that excessive salt intake, smoking, food habit and lifestyle were among the prime causes of being vulnerable to NCDs.

She said eating sufficient vegetables, fruits, and doing regular physical exercises can prevent the diseases.

Public health experts Md Khalequzzaman and Sohel Reza Choudhury, among others, spoke at the event.

They said available knowledge, information and policy support were needed to prevent NCDs.

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