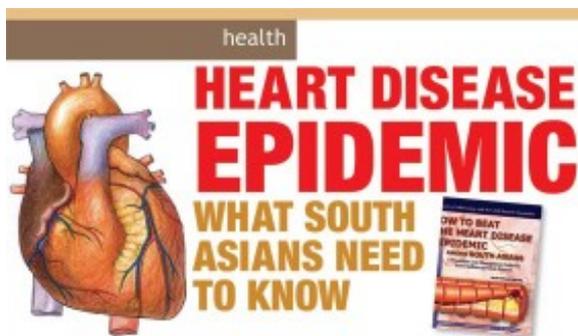


# Healthy Living

Your daily dose of health

## Indian subcontinent at higher risk of heart disease and diabetes

Rupali Gupta · Wednesday, February 9th, 2011

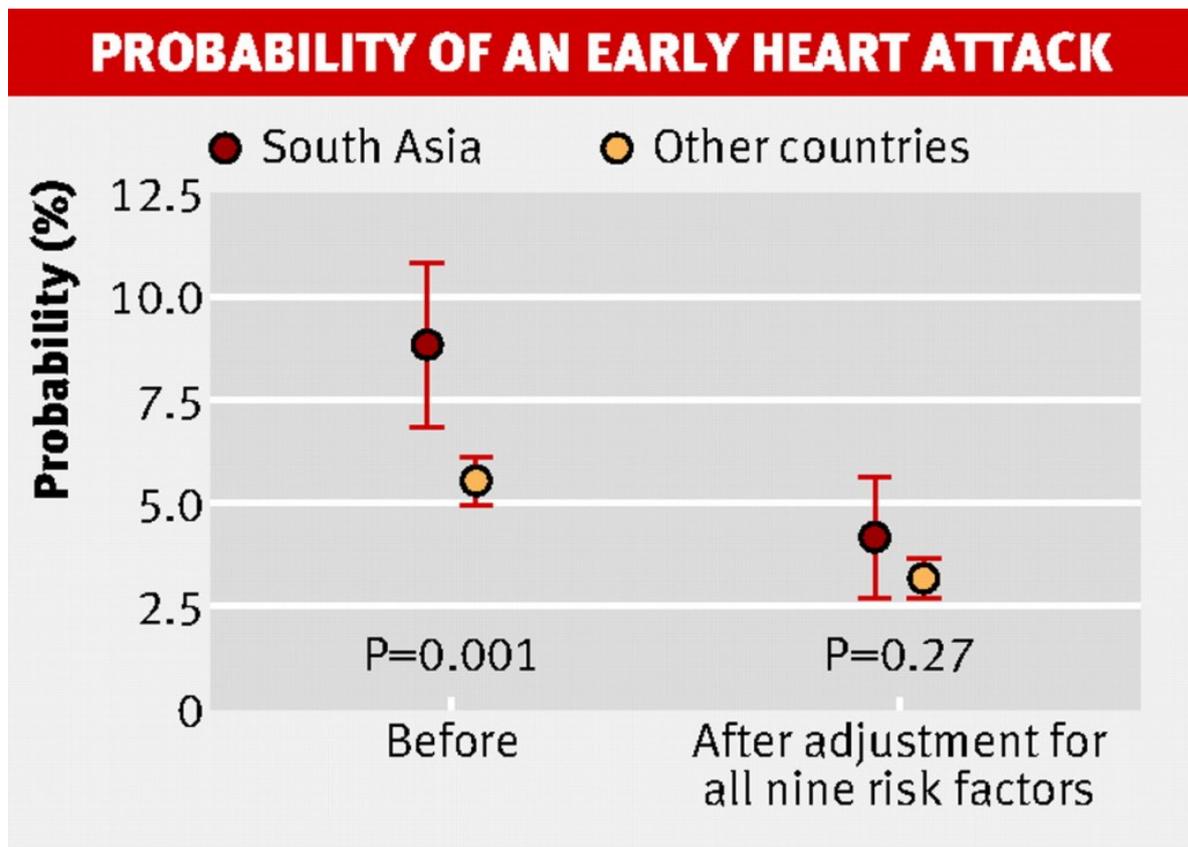


Indian subcontinent is hosting for one of the biggest sporting event of the region starting from 19 Feb 2011, Cricket World Cup. While the world cup preparations are at its peak, World Bank released a report which states South Asia is facing a health crisis with alarming levels of heart disease, obesity and diabetes. These diseases used to

be called as diseases of the developed world, but they have become now a global issue.

The report looked at the health conditions in the following countries; Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Maldives, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. The report revealed that

- South Asians suffer their first heart attacks at 53, six years earlier than people anywhere else.
- Heart disease is now the leading cause of death for South Asians aged 15 to 69.
- Non-communicable diseases account for 55% of regions total disease burden
- A study in India found some non-communicable diseases left sufferers unable to work for 50 to 70 days.



“This unfair burden is especially harsh on poor people, who, after heart attacks, face life-long major illnesses, have to pay for most of their care out of their savings or by selling their possessions, and then find themselves caught in a poverty trap where they can’t get better and they can’t work,” said co-author Michael Engelgau, a World Bank senior public health specialist.

#### **Why is South Asia at this health crisis juncture?**

The report gives the following reason for the spike in rates of on-communicable diseases:



- Key risk factors include poor nutrition and low birth weight
- Sufferers are susceptible to obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and glucose
- Smoking, a key risk factor for heart disease is common due to low price of tobacco and less regulation from government

The World Bank report also stated that smoking is responsible for one in five deaths

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among men in India. The scientific evidence gathered over the last two decades show that South Asians are at much more risk of heart attack due to genetic make up. It's difficult to circumvent the genetic factors that make South Asians more susceptible to heart disease and diabetes, but risk can be reduced by taking care of the risk factor such as smoking. I hope governments will take necessary steps to address this epidemic of non-communicable diseases in South Asian countries.

Via

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