

Top 5 lifestyle & dietary changes to avoid Diabetes, High Blood Pressure

India is home to 77 million diabetic patients and there is an overall prevalence of 30 per cent as far as hypertension is concerned, a very important risk factor behind cardiovascular diseases and morbidity. Our lifestyle today, as is often discussed, is responsible for this high prevalence, as more of us are required to juggle between different and critical roles professionally and personally, different spaces and sometimes even different time zones, all in the course of a day. Added to that, we have more than often taken recourse to several erroneous lifestyle choices like excess carb-heavy food, sugar, alcohol, drugs and caffeine to ease the pressure off, while our meals lacked sufficient nutrients and minds underwent chronic anxiety, stress and depression.

In the process, it is the overall health that has been hit the hardest. Incidents of lifestyle diseases, led by these reasons, have seen a meteoric rise in India to the extent that India is now called the Diabetic capital.

On the occasion of World Nutrition Week, we share in this article powerful yet doable tips and remedies in terms of mind-body practices, dietary and lifestyle changes focused on reducing hypertension and diabetes.

If you can recall, anytime your forehead burned or your stomach rumbled with an ache, your mother or grandma would have a solution at hand already.

Out came the pots and pans, strange-looking leaves and roots and whatnot. Before you knew, before you needed to let the doctor know, you were cured. You vividly remember how they would never let you leave home with an empty stomach, no matter how late you got.

They had the best home remedies. And how we were persuaded, pestered or threatened with dire consequences to abide by them. But as we outgrew childhood and adjusted to the demands of adult life, this peerless wisdom got left behind.

On the positive side, this has elicited a higher awareness about the dos and don'ts of lifestyle. Many of us are now willing to walk an extra mile to seek healthy options.

The recent years have seen a significant rise in the change of attitude towards minimalist living and organic eating.

Above all, an increased number of people are taking to Ayurveda and Yoga owing to their holistic approach and proximity to nature.

One of the risk factors at the root of both Diabetes and Hypertension is stress. If you are equipped with tools to manage stress, half your battle is won.

Stress increases the secretion of Glucagon hormones in the body, responsible for increasing blood glucose levels. Pranayama, meditation, Yoga Asanas (postures) and Sudarshan Kriya along with a correct diet have been proven to reduce glucagon and can also help improve insulin action.

Though stress is the major cause of diabetes, the condition in turn results in patients getting highly stressed about it, which further exacerbates the problem. Here meditation can help - restoring their confidence levels and they gain the strength to fight the condition and live well.

A common craving for diabetes is sweets. Studies have shown more awareness, an outcome of meditative practices can help us have better control over sugar cravings too.

Sudarshan Kriya is one of the most comprehensive breathing techniques derived from the science of Yogic Breath.

This is a precise, 5000-year-old science of health promotion. It recognizes the impact of the mind and emotions on creating and restoring optimal health.

It helps to eliminate stress through specific rhythms of breath and support the various organs and systems within the body, peace of mind is restored and it transforms overpowering emotions, thus supporting the whole mind-body system. Sudarshan Kriya, once learnt under the supervision of an Art of Living trainer can be practised at home every day.

Along with Sudarshan Kriya, it is imperative to take care of what we eat. Food can work wonders on any disease.

Dr Nisha Manikantan, a senior Art of Living instructor and Ayurveda expert shares some home remedies for diabetes - A diabetic should drink 30 ml of bitter gourd juice every morning and evening. Bitter gourd and lady's finger helps in lowering sugar levels in the blood and urine. Split 4 to 5 lady's fingers in half and soak them overnight.

The next morning drink this water to control the diabetes. Jamun seeds powder should be taken with water every morning on an empty stomach.

The bark and leaves of Jambul should be boiled in a cup of water and then drunk with half a cup of milk to arrest the progress of the disease. Either eat soaked fenugreek seeds with onion or just drink the water of the soaked seeds.

Those with joint problems should consume the powder of fenugreek seeds with water every morning on an empty stomach.

Every morning on an empty stomach juice of Neem leaves should be consumed.

Bael (stone apple) is also beneficial. Drinking filtrate of soaked sadabahar flowers (periwinkle) and leaves in the morning is useful.

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Home remedies for High Blood Pressure are 2-3 times a day a glass of warm lemon water can be consumed with a teaspoon of honey.

Watermelon juice early morning on an empty stomach is very beneficial and consuming apple also controls blood pressure. You can mix coriander powder with honey.

If you go for a walk then you should keep a small piece of ginger with 4-5 basil leaves and 4-5 small cubes of rock sugar in the mouth.

This should be slowly consumed in order to control the blood pressure.

Chewing 20 Neem leaves with water helps in reducing blood pressure. Boiled potatoes with their skins are valuable for lowering blood pressure as they absorb the lesser amount of salt. A salt-free diet is recommended for high blood pressure patients.

Soup and salad of raw vegetable juices should be taken especially carrot and spinach.

With this armory of Ayurveda, the demons of diabetes and high blood pressure can easily be defeated.

We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.

-Swami Vivekananda

MISSION VICTORY INDIA: Angular personalities of defence services

■ BRIG (RETIRED) B L POONIA

The military officer selection system has been elaborately covered by the Victory India Compendium of books, Pauji India and Mission Victory India over the past decade. This poignant piece on Angular personalities in the defence services by Brig B L Poonia adds a new dimension to the subject of military officer selection. The article links it interestingly with the nuances of selection and its implications on quality of leadership. Such selected officers with traits of Angular personality on reaching higher/apex ranks adversely affect the organisation, especially their subordinates who perform are destined to serve under them. An interesting dimension has been added to our over seven decades old Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR) based Services Selection Board (SSB) officer selection system.

What is an Angular Personality? These are the people whose personality graph at some point shows a prominent kink. They are generally difficult people? But how do we define difficult people? They are a 'minuscule minority' who are capable of making the life of others difficult. In a social group, they are capable of screwing the happiness of even a matured majority. They always want to remain in the limelight and dominate various social groups without having the caliber or the competence to do so. Basically, they suffer from a complex. In the Defence 'Services Selection Boards' (SSBs), they are classified as 'Factor Two' cases. To cut the story short, they are the people with low 'Emotional Intelligence'. They lack 'Fact', which involves skillful management of feelings of the person being dealt with. They don't care two hoots for the feelings of others, and derive a sadistic satisfaction in hurting people, in case it can satisfy their ego, because they lack the ability to put themselves into the other person's shoes. One may wonder as to why do these people always fire shots at a tangent! That is because they are 'Angular Personalities'. But then how did they get selected in the SSBs, and some of them even managed to reach very high ranks, to include Maj Gens, Lt Gens, Army Commanders or even Army Chiefs? I am aware of two such Army Commanders (one from Armoured Corps, and the other from Engineers), and one Army Chief (ex Infantry).

And that's because in SSB, such candidates are border line cases in 'Social Factor', but are at times pushed through by the Assessors by giving some grace marks. Those of us who have been Assessors will recall that not all candidates in the SSBs are cleared by all the three assessors, i.e., by GTO, the Psychologist, and the Interviewing Officer. Quite a few of them are cleared by giving grace marks. Otherwise the shortage of officers in the Defence Services will shoot up to unacceptable proportions. There was a time during 2001-2005, when the shortage of officers in the Defence Services had crossed the figure of 12,000, which has now been brought down to a little more than 9,700.

So to begin with, let's understand the basics of selection system in the Defence Services. In the SSB, a candidate is tested for 15 different Leadership Qualities, under four different factors. These are: Factor One: Planning and Organizing Factor; Factor Two: Social Adjustment Factor; Factor Three: Social Effectiveness Factor and Factor Four: Dynamic Factor.

You will be surprised to know that even a person whose Planning & Organizing, and Dynamic factors are very high, but the Social Factors are weak, can rise to the highest ranks, in case he can manage his bosses. Because the sufferers of the deficiency of the 'Social Factors' are not the seniors, but the juniors and the colleagues. And they are rightly known as 'Factor Two' cases (not 'Factor Three' cases), because 'Factor Three' of a person in any case, can never be higher than 'Factor Two'. Hence the officers, who are professionally competent, but socially cunning and clever, will always remain a pain for their subordinates and colleagues. Not only do they become

a pain for others, wherever they go, but some of them manage to rise to higher ranks too. Moreover, not attaining a particular rank in the ladder does not necessarily mean that the officer was not as good as the one who made it. Let's not forget that there is something called 'Destiny'. I would never like to consider anyone more knowledgeable, or a better officer, purely because of one's rank. But I would certainly respect anyone and everyone who is a gentleman with strong human values, is open to conviction, and respects the feelings of other people. In short, these are the people with high Emotional Intelligence. But let me clarify, that not all officers are 'Factor Two' cases. 95 per cent of them are really good, but it's the minuscule minority of 5 per cent that I am talking about. And you will find such officers across the spectrum, in different ranks; rather more in junior ranks, though a few manage to reach higher ranks too. Another typical problem, the Defence Services are confronted with, is the extremely steep pyramid structure for promotions. In fact, it would be more appropriate to call it an Eiffel Tower, rather than a pyramid with a steep gradient. As a result, many competent officers get left out, and don't make it to the ranks they could have possibly done so. And the best part is that the Civil Services are not faced with a challenge of climbing such a vertical structure.

As a result, in the Defence Services, many of us have been deprived the privilege of reaching higher ranks purely because of the lack of vacancies, and not necessarily because of the lack of competence. Had we had promotion avenues at par with the Civil Services, atleast 10 per cent of the officers who retired as Brigadiers, would have made it to the rank of Lt Gens, 25 per cent to the rank of Maj Gens, and almost 100 per cent of the selection grade Colonels, who retired as Colonels, would have made it to the rank of Brigadiers.

In fact, the Civil Services have gone a step ahead by using the logic that since 100 per cent of their officers are competent, it is the lack of vacancies which prevents them reaching the level of Central Govt Secretary or State Govt Chief Secretary (i.e., equivalent to an Army Commander), hence they must be compensated through NPU (Non Functional Upgrade) Pay. And they are. May be we cannot afford to apply the same template in the Defence Forces, as the requirements are totally different. However, the aim is neither to condemn the SSBs or the training institutions, nor the selection system post-commissioning, since the selection at all levels is based on judgmental system. The aim is only to examine the same objectively. After all the assessment of human personalities has to be based on human judgment, and we have to continue with the same, by constantly reviewing the methodology, with the aim of progressively improving the same, to the extent possible.

Moreover, the principle of 'Demand and Supply' is applicable to the officers selection too. For example, we can't afford to have the doctors of Army Medical Corps (AMC), and Army Dental Corps being screened through the SSBs. If we do that, the already existing high percentage of shortage, will shoot up to unacceptable levels. However, the Remount & Veterinary Corps (RVC) officers are already being screened through the SSBs, since their size is so small. And if hypothetically, the total requirement of the officer cadre is reduced to 75 per cent, no grace marks would be required to be given. But day by day, the strength of the officer intake is increasing ; which necessitates us to define, what constitutes an 'Average Officer', rather than looking for an 'Ideal Officer'. Moreover, qualities of Honesty, Integrity, Loyalty and Moral Courage cannot be judged in the SSBs, these simply need to be monitored continuously throughout the service; as there is no way out. Another factor for the dilution in the selection system had been due to the introduction of 'Trainability' in the SSBs after 1972. Additional marks are given for this, based on a candidate's age, pain

motivation level, background exposure, self-awareness, and the length of training. Moreover the SSBs assess a candidate based on his 'Potential', which means that the candidate has some qualities lying latent in him, which by the end of the training period would be developed, up to the required standard. Logically it makes sense, but the results have never been validated.

And yet we find that some of the officers who were screened through the SSBs even prior to 1972, when no marks for 'Trainability' were added, have also turned out to be 'Angular Personalities'. So it's really a very complex phenomenon to eliminate this category all together. To a certain degree, we have to rather learn, to live with it. No system can guarantee 100 per cent efficiency. The aim therefore, should be to minimize the inefficiency to the extent possible. And that precisely, is the real challenge. Moreover, our officers have performed so well in all the wars and various operations they have participated in. So our selection system has stood the test of time, and should not be looked upon as an outdated system. However, it needs a regular review, as there is always a scope for improvement.

As far as the Pre-Screening Tests in SSBs, that were introduced about two decades ago, may be re-examined, so that no potentially competent candidate is weeded out due to the constraints of time and shortage of Assessors available with the SSBs. A certain degree of physical fitness tests could also be introduced, the manpower for which could be provided for by the local formations. All this needs a serious attention lest it results in injustice to any competent candidate. Another point we need to remember is that the rank of an officer is not the exclusive criteria for his competence and caliber. Some of the officers, who retired in junior ranks, have made a immense contribution. We have primarily inherited the selection system from the British Defence Services. Capt Basil Liddle Hart, a British Army veteran, even as a Captain, had enunciated his famous military theories: 'Theory of Contracting Funnel' for Defensive Operations'. And the same had been accepted by the Generals and the Field Marshals of the British Army. In fact, they applied these theories during World War II; and so did their opponent German Generals like Rommel, Guderian, Manstein and Von Rundstedt.

It's only when we close our minds and restrict our thinking capacity to the last rank that we have held, we end up with the complex of our inability to match the ideas and wisdom of the senior officers. And it's this psychological handicap, which motivated Capt Norman F Dixon to come out with his famous book: 'Psychology of Military incompetence', an intelligent man's guide to the defects of the military minds. Its conclusions are incontrovertible, and it is still considered as a valuable text in studies of 'Leadership'.

Even as a Captain, he had the vision and courage to condemn even Field Marshal Montgomery for his dubious and inhumane decisions during the conduct of Operation Market Garden (17-25 Sep 1944) to seize the bridges over River Rhine in Holland, leading to 7000 men killed, wounded and missing, all in the one-upmanship to win the race for Berlin. In fact, he was awarded the 'Carpenter's Medal' for his work of exceptional distinction in 'Experimental Psychology' by the University of London. Moreover, Field Marshal Montgomery is just one example, he in his book has covered all the generals starting from Alexander, Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Chingis Khan, Napoleon and Hitler, just to name a few. Coming back to the Angular Personalities. You will find this minuscule 5 per cent lot spread over all over the country, and partly we have to learn to live with it. In everyday practical life, you don't need to be psychologist to find them out; what you need is just close observation. Just remember what Bruce Patterson, a renowned psychologist had once said, 'Psychologist is a man who, when a beautiful girl enters the room, watches everybody else.'

Barahoti Bowl: An Achilles Heel in India's Border Defence with China

■ COL RAJINDER KUSHWAHA

Over 100 PLA soldiers crossed the border at Barahoti in Uttarakhand last month, damaged some infrastructure, including a bridge, before retreating.' The above piece of news is startling. It seems the incident took place on 30 August 2021. It indicates that China was looking for opportunities to puncture India's growing military clout. It might be looking for a soft underbelly of Indian defence to deliver a la-1962 humiliation to checkmate India. Xi Jinping thinks India would be a major hindrance in its (China's) global ambitions. In order to checkmate India, China had tried to subdue India in Eastern Ladakh in 2020, but it failed. However, it has not backed out yet from its intended mission of Checkmating India. Barahoti incursion of 100 PLA troops on 30 August 2021, could as well be a probing mission. India has a 4057 Km long Line of Actual control border with China, running through J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. It can be divided into three sectors i.e., Western Sector opposite J&K; Eastern Sector opposite Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh and Middle-cum-Central Sector opposite Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. In all three sectors, India has unresolved border disputes with China. Most Indian citizens know about border disputes in East and West but a very few know about the Central Sector: Border dispute in the East is of non-recognition of the McMahon line border by China. She claims entire Arunachal Pradesh or some 65,000 square kilometres South of McMahon Line, which is considered as part of South Tibet. It might be recollected that McMahon line was demarcated by the British Indian Government through a treaty with the Tibetan Government in 1914. This treaty is not acceptable to China as she asserts that Tibet was not a sovereign to sign such a treaty. Boundary dispute in the West is about Aksai Chin and Demchok regions of Ladakh in J&K state of India. China had occupied some 35,241 square kilometers in Aksai Chin and 350 Sq Km in Demchok region during the 1962 war. China also claims some 150 sq Km area of Demchok region under Indian Control. Besides, Pakistan ceded to China some 5180 sq km of Shaksgam valley of J&K, which it had annexed in 1947. In the Middle Sector; opposite Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, there is a great chunk of territory claimed by China, which is hardly known to a common man in India. These areas are Chumar, Kaurik, Shikpi La, Neling and Laptha. It is a 507 km long belt but thinly held by India. Therefore, this region presents itself as an easy and a soft objective for China to capture in a limited border conflict, which would have a larger impact in the current world geo-politics.

These target areas are Kaurik & Shikpi La in Himachal Pradesh; Neling Valley with areas Leptha, Pulam Sumda and Sang etc. in Uttarakhand. These are claimed by China as a part of the Ngari Prefecture of the Zanda County of Tibet. However, in Middle Sector, there is another very significant region, called Barahoti Grassland, in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, whose grazing fields extend over some 80 kms. This is also claimed by China.

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Recently, in the last week of September 2021, PLA troops came on horses and destroyed a bridge in this bowl. China has been intruding into this region at will. It's an Achilles heel in India's defence. In the first week of June 2017, two Chinese Attack helicopters intruded into this area. They were probably on a reconnaissance mission.

Barahoti is some 397 Km from Dehradun. Nearest Roadhead is at Rimkhim, which is three km short of Barihoti Ridge. Thereafter, it is 700 meters of descent to reach the Barahoti Bowl, which has a Parvati Kund and two temples of Lord Shiva and goddess Kali. Chinese troops frequently intrude into the bowl and destroy the temples but they are always rebuilt by the locals.

The McMahon line runs North of Barahoti Bowl but China claims this grassland. The Indian Government, in a 1958 agreement with China, had declared this area as a No-Man's land, which was forbidden to be patrolled and occupied by two armies. This was a strange concession by the Nehruvian Government. It is generally not known to the general public. However, since the year 2,000, the Indian Government has allowed deployment of ITBP men in civilian clothes without weapons. In 2013, Uttarakhand chief minister Vijay Bahuguna told in an internal security meeting in Delhi that China made 37 incursion attempts between 2007-2012 in Barahoti. In 2015 and 2016 too, Chinese troops invaded Barahoti. Records show that between March 2017 and first week of June 2017, there had been four intrusions. The intrusion in June 2017, by two helicopters, was worrisome as it was by Zheva class Attack Helicopters. The question arises whether China was contemplating annexing this 80 Km of grassland without major effort with great international mileage. It must be noted that while Arunachal Pradesh and J&K parts of borders were well defended, it is the Middle Sector of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, inclusive of B