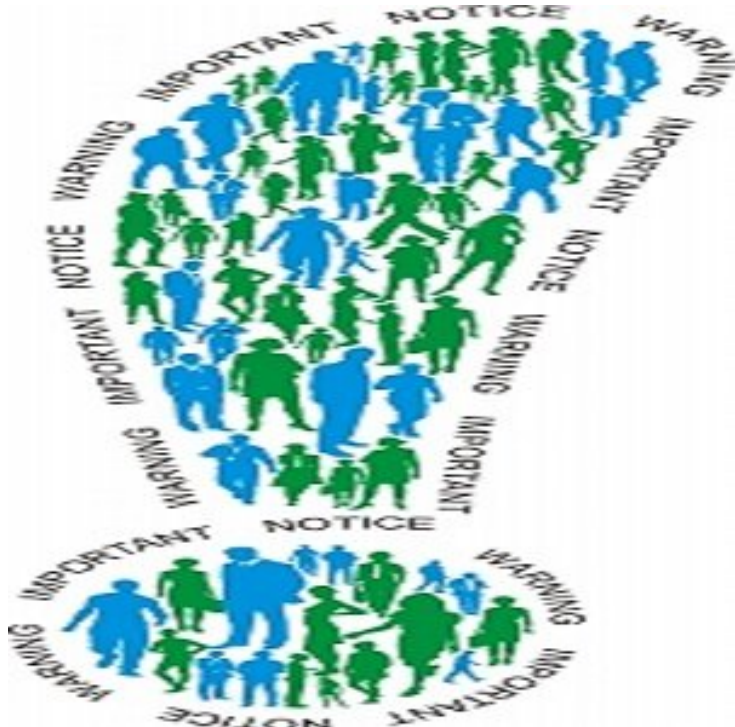


Indian govt to announce free glucose test for all

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Singapore: The Indian government is considering to conduct free glucose test for the entire Indian population, as the disease has almost assumed epidemic proportions in the country. The idea behind this nation-wide campaign is to facilitate earlier detection of the disease, thus easing disease management and reducing the risk of complications.

India's Science and Technology Minister, Dr Jitendra Singh, told in a recent press conference, "Millions of Indians suffer from diabetes and a plan to arrange for free glucose test for the entire population is under consideration. Screening is crucial as we are number two in the world in terms of diabetes sufferers after China."

Statistics state that India has 67 million diabetes cases while China has about 92 million. It is estimated that by 2030, India will have around 100 million diabetes patients and could surpass even China.

Dr Singh stated that many academic and government institutions in India were focusing on chronic ailments and their cure. He mentioned that the research supported by the Department of Biotechnology, India, on genetic and stem cells could be an answer to many diseases such as diabetes.

The Indian government had recently announced many plans to foster the development of healthcare and to promote health and wellness of the society. These included plans to launch the flagship National Health Assurance Mission which would comprise assured health packages, including essential drugs and diagnostics.

Under this mission, the poor are likely to get treatment free of cost and the rest of the population are expected to be covered under an insurance mechanism. A package of preventive and positive health information will also be made available to all citizens, with the health insurance scheme being a built-in feature of the mission.