

A Review and Analysis of Increasing Health Issues in and Around Pune City

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ABSTRACT

The study titled "A review and analysis of increasing health issues in and around Pune City." is a comprehensive investigation into the rising prevalence of health problems, particularly within the urban context of Pune, India. It systematically explores the causative factors, demographic impact, and possible mitigative strategies through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including structured interviews, surveys, and field observations. The core objective of this research is to dissect the root causes of escalating health concerns—ranging from lifestyle disorders such as obesity and sleep deprivation to environmentally triggered illnesses like dengue and respiratory infections. The study emphasizes how these issues are exacerbated by urban stressors: poor hygiene, excessive screen time, fast-food consumption, sedentary behavior, and a deteriorating work-life balance. Fieldwork consisted of interviews with medical professionals (notably Dr. Ankita Shukla and Dr. Rushali Pawar), working professionals, and college students. Their insights revealed a common thread stress, irregular routines, and lack of awareness being key contributors to declining health. Additionally, the study underscores the generational impact of unhealthy habits, where poor diet and lifestyle choices in adults appear to influence the immunity and well-being of children. The research also presents data visualization (in pie chart form) showing seasonal patterns of illness, with the rainy season accounting for the highest rates of sickness, and an alarming year-on-year rise in health issues highlighting 2024 as the peak so far. Key diseases on the rise include Type 2 Diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, sleep apnea, certain cancers, and mental health issues, with even rare diseases like GBS and Myocardial infections in children showing a surge. Furthermore, the paper examines the health risks of mobile phone overuse, especially in children, linking it to behavioral issues, sleep disruption, and cognitive decline. It also touches on malnutrition in its various forms, noting both undernutrition and obesity as dual threats to public health. In response, the paper proposes a multi-pronged solution strategy: from individual actions like improved sleep, diet, exercise, and mindfulness, to community-level measures such as cleaner environments and regular medical check-ups. It aligns these with existing governmental initiatives, including POSHAN Abhiyaan, Ayushman Bharat, and mental health helplines like KIRAN and Tele MANAS, advocating for greater utilization and public awareness. In conclusion, the study serves as both a diagnosis and a prescription alerting society to the worsening health landscape while equipping individuals and policymakers with actionable remedies. It calls for

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an urgent shift towards preventive care, lifestyle correction, and greater mental health support, especially in a post-COVID world where the immune system and collective health behavior have undergone significant shifts.

Keywords: *Health issues, lifestyle, environmental factors, stress, preventive measures, mental health, hygiene*

Pune, a rapidly expanding metropolitan hub in Maharashtra, India, a city bursting with culture, education, and a booming tech industry. But beneath the surface of this vibrant metropolis, a silent crisis is brewing. As lifestyles modernize and urban pressures mount, health issues among Pune's residents are escalating at an alarming rate. Once considered rare, ailments like Type 2 Diabetes, cardiac disorders, respiratory problems, and even psychological imbalances are now becoming disturbingly common, not only in adults but increasingly in children and young adults.

This research explores the deeply intertwined causes of this health crisis: sedentary routines, stress-heavy work culture, fast-food addictions, sleep deprivation, poor hygiene, and the unrelenting glare of mobile screens. Our society is eating more, sleeping less, and worrying more than ever before and it's showing up in our hospital records and daily lives.

Through field surveys, interviews with medical professionals and working citizens, and data analysis, this study aims to paint a vivid picture of what's going wrong with urban health. It dives into how lifestyle, environment, and socio-economic choices are collectively affecting our well-being, and more importantly, what can be done about it.

Health, once taken for granted, is now demanding attention and this report serves as both a wake-up call and a blueprint for action.

Scope and Objective of Study

Scope of Study

The study titled "A review and analysis of increasing health issues in and around Pune City." aims to uncover the alarming rise in physical and mental health problems, particularly in urban environments like Pune. With modern lifestyles shifting rapidly toward sedentary routines, processed diets, high stress levels, and increased screen time this study seeks to examine the root causes and real-world effects of these changes on public health.

The scope of this study encompasses a wide array of health concerns, ranging from obesity, undernutrition, and cardiovascular issues to mental health deterioration, weakened immunity, and sleep disorders. It also investigates the influence of environmental factors such as pollution, unhygienic surroundings, and seasonal disease outbreaks. Through field interviews with doctors, students, and working professionals, the research captures a multi-dimensional view of how health is being compromised across various demographics.

Objectives of Study

1. **Identify and Analyze Key Health Challenges:** To pinpoint the major health issues currently affecting Pune's population including both emerging diseases and the resurgence of previously rare conditions.
2. **Investigate Root Causes:** To explore the underlying reasons behind the rise in health problems, such as lifestyle imbalances, poor nutrition, stress, pollution, and technology overuse.

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3. Understand Demographic Impact: To evaluate how different age groups especially students, working professionals, and children are being uniquely affected by these health issues.
4. Gather and Synthesize Real-World Data: To conduct interviews and surveys to gain ground-level insights from medical professionals and citizens, enriching the study with lived experiences and frontline observations.
5. Evaluate Preventive and Governmental Measures: To review current healthcare policies, mental health programs, and national nutrition initiatives offered by the Indian government.
6. Offer Actionable Solutions: To propose realistic and easy-to-adopt recommendations for individuals and communities to prevent, manage, and reverse rising health concerns.
7. Promote a Culture of Health Consciousness: To encourage behavioral change and public awareness around regular health check-ups, hygiene, balanced living, and mental well-being.

LITERATURE SURVEY

The study titled "A review and analysis of increasing health issues in and around Pune City." is rooted in a growing body of interdisciplinary research that connects urbanization, lifestyle changes, environmental degradation, and psychological stress to a rise in both chronic and acute health problems. The following survey of relevant literature and expert insights forms the foundational backdrop for this research.

1. Medical Expert Perspectives

Interviews conducted with healthcare professionals, including Dr. Ankita Poonam Atul Shukla (Physiotherapist) and Dr. Rushali Pawar (B.A.M.S), highlight a noticeable uptick in diseases that were previously uncommon, such as Myocardial infarction in children, Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), and certain cancers. These experts draw attention to several key trends:

1. Increasing cardiac-related illnesses in younger age groups
2. Diet and sedentary lifestyle as major contributors
3. Mobile phone overuse leading to physical and mental health degradation
4. The intergenerational impact of poor lifestyle choices on children's immunity

Their firsthand clinical experience supports the growing concern that modern living is making people sick—sooner and more severely than in previous generations.

2. Lifestyle and Stress in the Working Population

Survey responses from working professionals like Mr. Shivam Nimbalkar (XR Developer) and Mr. Vivek Lahane (CEO, Dream Sculpt Designs) reveal the toll that long working hours, high-stress environments, and screen dependence are taking on physical and mental health. Common complaints such as neck and back pain, irregular sleep, and stress-induced fatigue dominate their narratives. Despite efforts to maintain wellness routines, the demanding nature of corporate life often undermines health maintenance, confirming findings from stress and occupational health studies.

3. Student Health and Academic Pressure

Insights from students such as Naveena Bhatt and Adarsh Kathar illustrate how academic pressure, unhealthy eating habits, and lack of structured physical activity contribute to stress, illness, and declining mental wellness among youth. Research from global and Indian studies

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supports this, indicating that students face growing levels of anxiety, depression, and burnout due to hyper-competitive environments, peer pressure, and erratic schedules.

4. Environmental and Seasonal Health Risks

The study also identifies poor sanitation, polluted water, and open waste disposal as leading causes of disease, especially during the rainy season, when illnesses like malaria, dengue, and flu spike. This echoes findings in public health literature that connect unclean environments with vector-borne and communicable diseases, particularly in densely populated urban areas.

5. Mobile Phone Usage and Its Side Effects

Multiple health sources, along with expert interviews, point to the overuse of mobile phones as a silent yet significant contributor to physical and psychological ailments. Commonly reported effects include:

1. Sleep disorders due to blue light exposure
2. Eye strain, migraines, and posture problems
3. Mental health concerns like anxiety, addiction, and social withdrawal

These observations are supported by academic studies and health advisories warning against excessive screen time, especially among children and adolescents.

6. Government and Public Health Interventions

The literature also incorporates a review of government initiatives addressing malnutrition and public health, such as:

1. POSHAN Abhiyaan
2. Ayushman Bharat and PM-JAY
3. National Tele Mental Health Program (Tele MANAS)
4. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

These programs aim to provide both preventive and curative care across physical and mental health domains, yet awareness and implementation remain limited at the grassroots level an issue consistently echoed in related public health research.



Fig.1

METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative Approach
- In-depth Interviews

The qualitative data collection centered around semi-structured interviews conducted with three key demographic groups—healthcare professionals, working individuals, and students. These interviews offered critical insight into the real-world causes and consequences of increasing health issues, far beyond what raw statistics could convey.

A) Healthcare Professionals:

- Dr. Ankita Shukla and Dr. Rushali Pawar provided detailed accounts of:
 1. Emerging diseases like GBS, monkeypox, myocardial infection in children.
 2. The shift of rare diseases into common occurrences, including TB, stroke, AIDS, and respiratory failures.
 3. The intergenerational transfer of poor immunity due to bad diets and sedentary lifestyles.
 4. The impact of stress, sedentary jobs, and mobile phone addiction on heart health and mental well-being.

B) Working Professionals:

- Professionals like Mr. Shivam Nimbalkar (XR Developer) and Mr. Vivek Lahane (CEO) shared lived experiences regarding:
 1. Work-induced physical ailments such as neck and back pain.
 2. Mental stress stemming from long work hours and digital dependency.
 3. Lack of organizational support for mental or physical health needs.
 4. The constant battle to balance wellness with professional obligations.

C) College Students:

- Students like Naveena Bhatt and Adarsh Kathar contributed perspectives on:
 1. Academic burnout, deadline anxiety, and the toll of career uncertainty.
 2. Dietary inconsistencies and reliance on junk food due to time constraints.
 3. Disrupted routines, lack of regular exercise, and mental health neglect.
 4. A common feeling of limited institutional support for emotional and physical wellness.

D). Quantitative Approach

- Survey-Based Data Collection:

The quantitative component of the research utilized health surveys, statistical breakdowns, and visual data representations to identify measurable trends in public health deterioration.

a) Data Trends:

- The study included pie charts showing the seasonal variation in illness:
 1. Rainy season had the highest rate of sickness.
 2. Winter followed, while summer had the lowest illness occurrence.
- Another pie chart displayed the yearly progression of health issues:
 1. Health problems have drastically increased in 2024, with a 64% rise, largely due to post-COVID lifestyle disruptions.

b) Medical Data and Symptoms Tracked:

- Prevalent health conditions identified include:
 1. Type 2 Diabetes

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2. Fatty liver disease
3. Migraines
4. Sleep apnea
5. Emotional instability
6. Skin ulcers
7. Malaria, dengue, and flu
 - Root causes were mapped quantitatively to factors such as:
 1. Overweight and undernutrition
 2. Poor hygiene practices
 3. Inadequate sleep
 4. Excessive mobile phone use

c) Health System Evaluation:

- Government programs were assessed for their scope, accessibility, and impact:
 1. POSHAN Abhiyaan
 2. Ayushman Bharat & PM-JAY
 3. Tele-MANAS and KIRAN Helpline
- These were evaluated against the population's awareness and usage rates

E) Case Study:

I had the opportunity to interact with a wide spectrum of individuals, including doctors, fellow students, and working professionals. These interactions provided me with valuable insights into the diverse health challenges faced by people from different walks of life, and the underlying causes contributing to this growing concern.

Among students, the predominant sources of stress stem from academic pressures, such as assignments, exams, and the anxiety of future career planning. This often leads to poor sleep routines, irregular meals, and a lack of physical activity, all of which negatively affect both mental and physical well-being.

In contrast, working professionals face a different but equally demanding set of challenges. They struggle with long work hours, sleep deprivation, occupational stress, and in many cases, financial instability. These factors collectively contribute to a decline in overall health, often pushing wellness to the background in the pursuit of professional success.

The doctors I interviewed provided valuable medical perspectives, identifying key causes of modern health problems ranging from unhealthy diets, lack of exercise, poor hygiene, to excessive screen time and environmental factors. Importantly, they also offered practical solutions and preventive strategies, which are discussed throughout the report.

The core message that emerges from this research is the urgent need for balance. Individuals must strive to better manage their work and academic responsibilities while prioritizing their health. This involves incorporating regular physical activity, a clean and nutritious diet, reducing screen time, especially for children, and maintaining hygienic living conditions. Additionally, minimizing the consumption of processed and outside food can significantly reduce the risk of many preventable diseases.

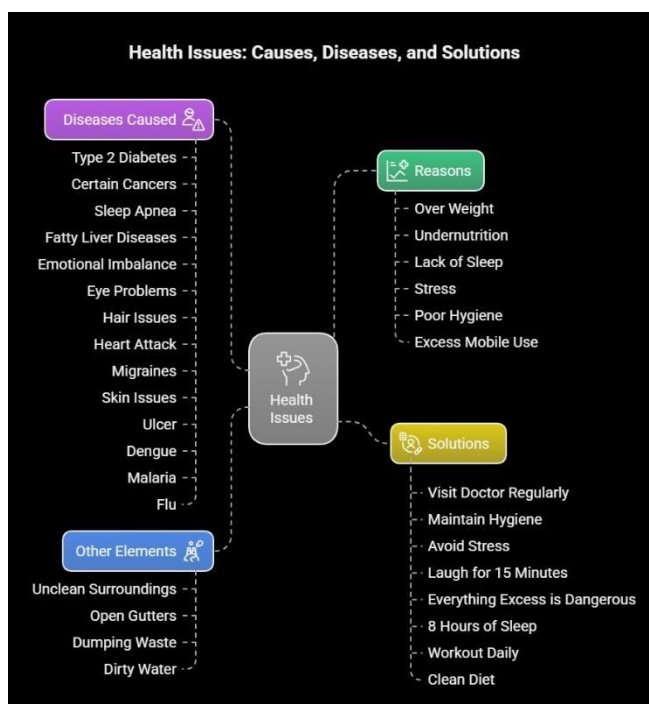


Fig .2

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Key Causes of Health Issues

1. Lifestyle Factors

The research highlights a major shift in daily habits—particularly among urban populations—that has led to the rise of numerous health problems. Participants across all demographics reported irregular meals, frequent consumption of junk food, lack of exercise, and poor sleep routines. According to doctors interviewed in the study, these habits weaken immunity and are direct contributors to chronic illnesses like obesity, diabetes, and heart diseases. Students, in particular, admitted to skipping exercise and opting for fast food due to time constraints and limited cooking skills.

2. Environmental Factors

The field survey observed that unclean surroundings, such as open gutters, waste dumping, and stagnant dirty water, significantly increase the risk of vector-borne diseases like dengue and malaria. These conditions, especially common during the rainy season, act as breeding grounds for disease-spreading insects. Additionally, environmental neglect compounds respiratory illnesses due to polluted air and poor sanitation.

3. Stress

Stress emerged as a dominant health risk across all groups. For students, the burden of assignments, exams, and career uncertainty was a major source of mental fatigue and anxiety. Among working professionals, stress was tied to long working hours, financial pressures, and lack of rest. Doctors noted that stress often manifests in physical symptoms such as migraines, sleep apnea, and emotional instability, making it both a mental and physical health issue.

4. Technological Overuse

Both students and working professionals reported excessive use of mobile phones and screens. This overuse leads to eye strain, sleep disturbances, social withdrawal, and posture-

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related issues such as neck and back pain. Doctors specifically emphasized that children exposed to screens for long periods exhibit behavioral changes, early vision issues, and reduced outdoor activity. This digital dependency is seen as a major contributor to declining mental and physical health.

A. Common Health Problems Identified

a. Chronic Diseases

The study identified a growing prevalence of chronic, lifestyle-related diseases. These include:

- Type 2 Diabetes
- Fatty Liver
- Cardiovascular Diseases (e.g., Heart Attacks)
- Certain Cancers

These diseases are no longer confined to older adults they are increasingly being reported in young adults and, alarmingly, even in children, due to poor lifestyle choices and hereditary weakening of immunity.

b. Stress-Induced Disorders

- High stress levels have been linked to:
- Sleep Apnea
- Migraines
- Emotional Imbalance

Stress-related mental health issues also manifest physically, leading to weakened coping abilities and burnout, especially among students and office workers.

c. Environmental Diseases

Seasonal and hygiene-related illnesses remain a persistent threat. These include:

- Dengue
- Malaria
- Flu and Respiratory Infections

The rainy season consistently shows a spike in cases, primarily due to poor sanitation and increased breeding of disease-carrying insects.

B. Demographic Insights

a. Student

Students face a triple burden: academic stress, poor diet, and minimal physical activity. Interviews revealed their awareness of health practices, but poor time management and peer influence often led to inconsistent routines and reliance on unhealthy food.

b. Working Professionals

Professionals reported frequent back and neck pain, eye fatigue, and poor sleep cycles due to screen-heavy, sedentary jobs. Many lack structured wellness routines and depend on convenience-based living, which contributes to long-term health decline.

c. General Public

The broader population is increasingly vulnerable to lifestyle diseases (e.g., diabetes, obesity) and environmental illnesses (e.g., infections due to poor hygiene). The impact is magnified

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by post-pandemic behavioral shifts, where work-from-home, digital reliance, and stress have become normalized.

Disease Trends

The collected data and visual charts indicate a year-on-year rise in health issues, with 2024 showing the highest spike (64%). The rainy season sees a surge in illnesses, primarily due to infectious and vector-borne diseases exacerbated by unclean environments.

The post-COVID era is identified as a turning point, where lifestyle disruptions (overeating, stress, lack of exercise) became widespread. This period also saw a decline in immunity, making individuals more susceptible to illnesses.

C. Concluding Remarks

This research reveals an alarming reality: health issues are no longer the exception—they are becoming the norm, especially in urban, fast-paced lifestyles like that of Pune. Through interviews and observational analysis, the study shows how deeply rooted modern health problems are in our daily choices, social pressures, and environmental negligence.

There is an urgent need for individuals to adopt healthier routines, including:

- Regular physical activity
- A cleaner, more nutritious diet
- Reduced screen time
- Stress management techniques (e.g., yoga, meditation)
- Maintaining hygienic living conditions

Moreover, institutions—be it schools, colleges, or workplaces—must take active roles in promoting wellness programs, mental health support, and healthy behavioral change.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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