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Abstract

In the past, communicable diseases caused the highest mortality in Iran. Improvements in socioeconomic status and living standards including access to safe drinking water, along with the inception of Health Houses in the 1980s, have changed disease patterns, decreasing the spread of and deaths from infectious and communicable diseases. The incidence and prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCD), however, have now increased in Iran, accounting for nearly 80% of deaths and disabilities. Without interventions, NCD are predicted to impose a substantial human and economic burden in the next 2 decades. However Iran's health system is not equipped with the necessary policies to combat this growth and must refocus and reform. Therefore in the year 2013, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education funded a well-designed nationwide cohort study—Prospective Epidemiological Research Studies in Iran (PERSIAN)—in order to assess the burden of NCD and investigate the risk factors associated with them in the different ethnicities and geographical areas of Iran. The PERSIAN Cohort, which aims to include participants, has 4 components: Adult (main), Birth, Youth and Elderly, which are being carried out in 22 different regions of Iran. Having an enormous dataset along with a biobank of blood, urine, hair and nail samples, the PERSIAN Cohort will serve as an important infrastructure for future implementation research and will provide the evidence needed for new healthcare policies in order to better control, manage and prevent NCD.

Keywords: PERSIAN, Cohort, NCD, Iran

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