

COUNTRY PROFILE: INDIA

Overview of Resolve to Save Lives

Resolve to Save Lives (RTSL) works in collaboration with government and other partners to end preventable deaths from cardiovascular disease. We are working to increase the global control of hypertension to 50%, reduce the global intake of salt by 30% and eliminate artificial trans fat from the global food supply chain. RTSL is committed to saving lives from these preventable causes by implementing scalable, proven strategies to reach these goals.

Resolve to Save Lives Services PLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of RTSL and promotes the organization's mission by adapting these strategies to the country context and collaborates with experts, offers technical assistance, provides programmatic support and generates evidence for policy action. RTSL aims to enhance cardiovascular health outcomes in India through evidence-based interventions and innovative strategies and is committed to supporting the Government of India in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.4.¹

KEY STATISTICS

2.6 MILLION DEATHS ARE FROM CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

out of which more than 50% are due to high blood pressure.²



People on average consume

DOUBLE THE RECOMMENDED
amount of sodium³



220 MILLION ADULT POPULATION HAS HYPERTENSION.⁴

Of them, only 29% are aware, 16% are on treatment, and 12% have it under control.⁵



70,000 DEATHS

from coronary heart disease each year can be directly linked to trans fat consumption.⁶

RTSL India's Goals

Goal 1: Improve hypertension treatment and control at the primary health care level by supporting implementation of evidence based protocols, improving access to antihypertensive treatment, team based care, patient centred services and strengthen systems for supportive supervision, monitoring and reviews.

Goal 2: Promote healthy diets through trans fat elimination and salt reduction, including trans fat regulations, front-of-package labelling, and healthy food procurement policies.

Goal 3: Reduce population-level salt consumption through implementation of policies and interventions targeting the salt content of foods consumed at home, outside of home and in packaged foods.

1 Sustainable Development Goal 3.4 aims to reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by one-third by 2030 through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

2 Global Report on Hypertension. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240081062>

3 WHO global report on sodium intake reduction. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2023. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

4 Varghese JS, Venkateshmurthy NS, Sudharsanan N, et al. Hypertension Diagnosis, Treatment, and Control in India. JAMA Netw Open. 2023;6(10):e2339098. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.39098

5 National Noncommunicable Disease Monitoring Survey 2017-18.

6 World Health Organization. (2020). Countdown to 2023: WHO report on global trans-fat elimination 2020. World Health Organization



Our work



Hypertension Control

- RTSL is committed to supporting the Government of India in achieving SDG 3.4. To strengthen hypertension and diabetes treatment and control under the National Program for Prevention & Control of NCDs (NP-NCD), RTSL served as the technical partner to the India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI), a multistakeholder initiative with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Indian Council of Medical Research, State Governments, and WHO India. IHCI was launched in 2017 and by end 2023, had enrolled over 7.5 million hypertensive and 4 million diabetic patients in 157 districts across 27 states.
- The tremendous success of IHCI made hypertension a national health priority and all IHCI strategies have been integrated into the NP-NCD. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare subsequently launched the “75 by 25” initiative, aimed at ensuring 75 million people with hypertension or diabetes are on standard care by 2025.
- Strengthening hypertension and diabetes services at the primary health level through IHCI has served as an entry point for overall strengthening of NCD services as a component of Comprehensive Primary Health Care under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana. Based on the learnings from IHCI, RTSL is collaborating with a range of government agencies and partners to strengthen primary health care, focusing on hypertension and diabetes management and control.
- In order to strengthen synergies with other National programs, RTSL demonstrated the operational feasibility of providing integrated screening and management of hypertension among people living with HIV at antiretroviral therapy centres in Mumbai, using a single window approach. Learnings from this project can be scaled under the National AIDS Control Program and serve as a model for integrating hypertension care in other national programs.
- The private sector provides 70% of outpatient care in India, making it key to achieving SDG 3.4. RTSL supports strategies and models to engage with private sector providers, focusing on potential to scale. Projects include conducting a landscaping study on the antihypertensive drug market in India; understanding the practices and incentives of private providers in rural and peri-urban areas of Telangana related to hypertension care and management; collaborating with private clinics in urban slums of Mumbai to standardize delivery of hypertension care; and leveraging private pharmacies in rural Bihar to facilitate task-sharing in screening and management of hypertension.



Sodium Reduction

- To promote population-level sodium reduction through evidence-based policies and interventions, RTSL has adopted a strategy that targets three key sources of sodium in Indian diets, namely: food cooked at home; food consumed outside of home, including public procurement policies; and packaged foods.



- RTSL focuses on healthier diets as a key component of NCD programs and piloted community and facility-based behaviour change interventions to reduce sodium intake. Additionally, RTSL initiated pilot programs to increase the uptake of low-sodium salt by raising awareness and improving affordability, in partnership with Public Health Foundation of India. RTSL is also working with Sapiens Foundation on a project aimed at training of physicians on sodium reduction interventions in clinical settings.
- Through a pilot project with Vision for Social Development, RTSL focused on improving cooking practices and raised awareness among children and teachers on salt reduction. This project promotes healthier school food environments through initiatives like improving the nutritional quality of school meals under the PM-POSHAN scheme. The demonstration project is implemented in Karnataka and currently being expanded statewide.
- Research indicates that warning labels are most effective in helping consumers identify unhealthy food in the Indian context. RTSL supports front-of-pack labels, which have the potential of enabling consumers to identify unhealthy foods and make healthier food choices.
- Fiscal policies, including taxes on foods high in fats, sugar & salt (HFSS), can discourage the purchase of unhealthy foods and encourage reformulation. These are most effective when paired with subsidies for healthy foods. RTSL is collaborating with Institute of Economic Growth (IEG) and Centre for Health Economics & Policy Innovation (CHEPI) at Imperial College, London on a study to estimate the potential health and economic impact of taxation on HFSS foods.



Trans Fat Elimination

- RTSL has partnered with the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop and support REPLACE, an initiative to eliminate toxic artificial trans fat from the global food supply. REPLACE equips governments with the tools needed to regulate trans fats while sensitizing manufacturers to facilitate the transition towards healthier alternatives.
- To advance a best-practice policy eliminating trans fats in India, RTSL collaborated with the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and supported awareness generation programs, stakeholder capacity-building, and advised on surveillance framework. RTSL also provided technical assistance to the National Reference Lab for Fats & Oils for trans fat assessment.
- These efforts led to the achievement of a major milestone: India became the first low-/middle-income country to successfully pass a best-practice trans fat elimination policy in January 2021.
- Currently, RTSL is further supporting policy enactment by implementing a learning model for trans fat policy implementation at the state level, integrating trans fat elimination into healthier diets and food safety initiatives, supporting laboratory capacity and identifying and evaluating strategies to facilitate the transition towards healthier oil alternatives.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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