
2. Heart Ailments

Why in News?

- Some experts have recently suggested the Large-Scale Screening Tests to prevent Heart Ailments.

Highlights

- The main purpose of screening or early detection is to pick up people with probable disease and confirm it with another test.
- Screening tests are usually cheap and easy to operate on a large-scale while confirmatory tests are resource intensive.
- The goal of mass screening is to detect heart diseases in their early stages, before symptoms appear, so that preventive measures can be taken to reduce the risk of future heart attacks or sudden cardiac death.
- The screening tests for heart ailments include Blood Pressure measurement, cholesterol and lipid profile test, ECG (Electrocardiogram), etc.
- These tests can help identify the risk of heart disease, irregular heart rhythms, abnormalities in the heart's structure or function.
- The risks associated with screening tests include both the risk of procedure (how tests are performed) as well as false labeling.
- For instance, stress ECG when used as a screening test in young asymptomatic patients gives many false positives.
- This results in unnecessary anxiety and more unwarranted tests to confirm or reject its findings.
- Using modern medical tools such as stress echocardiography, radionuclide tests, and CT angiography should be limited to a smaller set of people who are at higher risk of ischemic heart disease.
- High-risk individuals can be identified by screening for known risk factors such as tobacco use, obesity, hypertension, diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, and family history of early heart disease.
- However, the most important approach for preventing cardiac deaths is to promote healthy habits among populations of all ages.
- Simple tests for known risk factors are cheap, widely available, and can be conducted during standard executive checkups at district hospitals.