Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Health*

Why in news?

November month is marked as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease or COPD awareness month.

- **COPD –** It is a ***progressive lung condition*** that causes breathing difficulties due to restricted airflow, which is a result of lung damage.
- **Types of COPD – Chronic bronchitis** (inflammation of the lining of the airways, or the tubes of the lungs) and **emphysema** (air sacs of the lungs, known as alveoli, are damaged).
- **Causes –** Smoking (active & passive), indoor air pollution, long-term exposure to chemical fumes/dust at workplaces, airborne toxins, history of childhood respiratory infections, **Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency** (genetic disorder).
- **Symptoms –** Shortness of breath, wheezing or other lung sounds, bluish skin (cyanosis), Chest tightness, fatigue, frequent lung infections, etc. and other conditions like flu, pneumonia and heart conditions.
- **Diagnosis –** One of the main tests is ***spirometry***, also based on a medical history, symptoms and through tests including imaging, pulmonary function tests and lab tests.

  Spirometry *is a lung functioning test which measures lung capacity and airflow speed.*

- **Treatment –** There is ***no cure for COPD***, but focused on managing symptoms and reducing flare ups.
- Like quit smoking, medicines, oxygen therapy, vaccination, pulmonary rehabilitation, staying physically active, etc, and sometimes surgery may be recommended.
- **Prevalence -** According to WHO, COPD is the 4th leading cause of death worldwide, causing 3.5 million deaths in 2021, approximately 5% of all

global deaths.

- **WHO** reports that Tobacco smoking accounts for over 70% cases in high-income countries; in low & middle-income countries (LMIC) - major risk factor is tobacco smoking (30–40%) and household air pollution.
- As per the **Lung India, 2021**, the overall prevalence in India is 7.4% - Urban areas: 11%, Rural areas: 5.6% & estimated national burden – 37.6 million people with spirometry-defined COPD.

Reference

The Hindu | Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease