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Chronic Kidney Disease in India: The Disease You Don’t Feel Coming

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Chronic Kidney Disease in India: The Disease You Don’t Feel Coming

Why can a person lose most of their kidney function without knowing? Early kidney damage rarely hurts. One large Indian screening study found that nearly 1 in 5 people screened had chronic kidney disease. Very few of them knew it.

1 What is chronic kidney disease?

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a long-term, gradual loss of kidney function. Doctors measure it with the estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate (eGFR). The eGFR shows how well the kidneys filter waste.

Why is it called silent?

- CKD often has no symptoms in its early stages.
- A person may lose up to 60-70% of kidney function before symptoms appear.
- A normal serum creatinine test can miss serious damage.
- So screening matters.

What is the memory hook?

Think “silent until late”. Test early, not when it hurts.

> **Quick check 1.** A person can lose most kidney function before symptoms appear. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

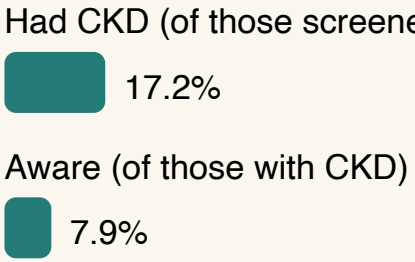
Sources: prsindia.org

2 What did the SEEK study find?

SEEK stands for Screening and Early Evaluation of Kidney Disease. It was published in BMC Nephrology in 2013.

What are the key numbers?

- It studied 5,588 people.
- Overall CKD prevalence was 17.2%.
- About 6% had CKD stage 3 or worse.
- Only 7.9% of those with CKD knew they had it.
- Data were collected from June 2005 to May 2007.



Many cases, little awareness. Original explanatory diagram.

What is the memory hook?

Think “17 found, 8 aware”. Many cases, little awareness.

> **Quick check 2.** The SEEK study found that most people with CKD knew they had it. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov; link.springer.com

3 Who is at risk?

The SEEK study looked at what else people with CKD had.

What were the common conditions?

- Hypertension: 64.5% of people with CKD.
- Anaemia: 40.7%.
- Diabetes: 31.6%.
- The 177th report adds that 16% of CKD cases have no traditional cause. This is called CKD of unknown cause (CKDu).
- CKDu hits young farm and outdoor workers. Heat stress and pesticide exposure are suspected.

What is the memory hook?

Think “BP, blood, sugar”. Hypertension leads.

> **Quick check 3.** Diabetes was the most common condition among people with CKD in SEEK. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov; prsindia.org

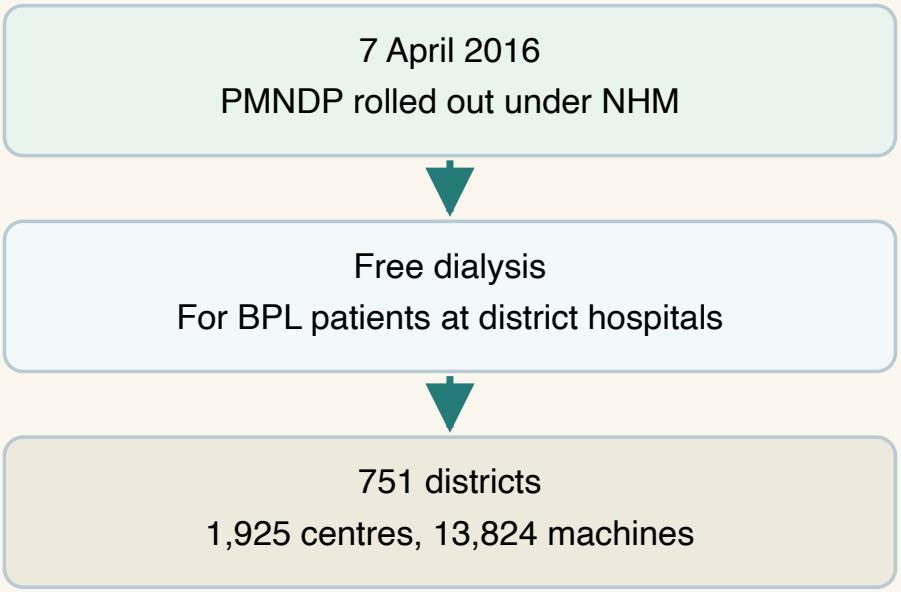
4 What is the dialysis programme?

The last stage of CKD is end-stage renal disease (ESRD). The patient then needs dialysis or a transplant.

What do we know about PMNDP?

- About 2.2 lakh new ESRD patients are added in India every year, says the programme portal.

- The Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP) was rolled out on 7 April 2016.
- It runs under the National Health Mission at district hospitals.
- It gives free dialysis to Below Poverty Line patients.
- The portal now lists 36 States and UTs, 751 districts, 1,925 centres and 13,824 machines.



Launch, who pays, reach. Original explanatory diagram.

What is the memory hook?

Think “2016, free, 751”. Launch year, who pays, districts.

> **Quick check 4.** CKD of unknown cause (CKDu) is about 16% of cases, per the 177th report. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: pmndp.mohfw.gov.in

5 What did the 177th report say about cost?

The Health and Family Welfare Committee presented the 177th report on 7 August 2026. Its chair is Prof. Ram Gopal Yadav.

What are the key points?

- Managing CKD may cost Rs 2 to 5 lakh a year.
- Maintenance dialysis may cost Rs 3 to 6 lakh a year.
- The report estimates 138 million people with CKD in India.
- Nearly two lakh people reach end-stage disease each year.
- It asked for PM-JAY post-transplant cover to rise from 15 days to one year.
- It asked for the family cover to rise from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh a year.

What is the memory hook?

Think “177th, 7 August, 15 days to one year”.

> **Quick check 5.** PMNDP was rolled out on 7 April 2016. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: prsindia.org

6 What did it ask for in screening and staff?

The committee wants a shift to prevention first.

What are the main asks?

- Report eGFR with every serum creatinine test, at no extra cost.

- Run kidney function tests twice a year for everyone aged 20 and above.
- Make them free for BPL patients and cheap for others.
- Use Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, ASHAs and ANMs to find high-risk people.
- Fill nephrologist posts in states such as Bihar, Odisha, Rajasthan, Assam and Chhattisgarh.
- Set up nephrology departments in all government medical colleges.

What is the memory hook?

Think “eGFR with every test, KFT twice a year”.

> **Quick check 6.** PMNDP is a hospital insurance scheme. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: prsindia.org

7 What are the exam traps?

Four mix-ups come up often.

What are the traps?

- **Prevalence or awareness?** 17.2% had CKD. Only 7.9% of them knew.
- **PMNDP or PM-JAY?** PMNDP is a dialysis programme. PM-JAY is hospital insurance.
- **Which report?** The 176th report is on healthcare affordability. The 177th is on CKD.
- **Different estimates.** SEEK found 17.2% in a screened group. The committee cites 138 million people nationally.

What is the memory hook?

Think “found, aware, dialysis, 177”.

> **Quick check 7.** The 177th report asked for kidney function tests twice a year for everyone aged 20 and above. *(True or False?)*
>
> See answer ↓

Sources: pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov; pmndp.mohfw.gov.in; prsindia.org

Practice MCQs

1. The SEEK study screened 5,588 people across India. What overall prevalence of Chronic Kidney Disease did it find?

A. 27.2%

B. 7.2%

C. 1.7%

D. 17.2%

See answer ↓

2. What share of people with CKD in the SEEK study were aware of their disease?

A. 40.7%

B. 17.2%

C. 7.9%

D. 64.5%

See answer ↓

3. On what date was the Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme rolled out?

A. 1 February 2016

B. 7 April 2016

C. 15 August 2017

D. 25 September 2018

See answer ↓

4. Which condition was most common among people with CKD in the SEEK study?

A. Obesity

B. Hypertension

C. Diabetes

D. Anaemia

See answer ↓

5. The 177th committee report asked that which value be reported with every serum creatinine test?

A. Lipid profile

B. eGFR

C. HbA1c

D. Blood urea only

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **D.** The answer is the SEEK study's overall CKD prevalence, 17.2% of the people it screened. Only 7.9% of those with CKD knew they had it. Memory hook: 17 found, 8 aware. ↑ Q1
2. **C.** The answer is 7.9%. The 17.2% figure is the overall CKD prevalence. Hypertension (64.5%) and anaemia (40.7%) were common among people with CKD. Memory hook: 17 found, 8 aware. ↑ Q2
3. **B.** The answer is 7 April 2016. It was announced in Union Budget 2016-17. It runs under the National Health Mission at district hospitals. Memory hook: 2016, free, district hospitals. ↑ Q3
4. **B.** The answer is hypertension at 64.5%. Anaemia was 40.7% and diabetes 31.6%. Memory hook: BP, blood, sugar. ↑ Q4
5. **B.** The answer is eGFR, the estimated Glomerular Filtration Rate. It shows how well the kidneys filter. The committee also asked for kidney function tests twice a year for people aged 20 and above. Memory hook: eGFR with every test. ↑ Q5

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** Up to 60-70% may be lost before symptoms. ↑ 1
2. **False.** it is false. Only 7.9% were aware. ↑ 2
3. **False.** it is false. Hypertension led at 64.5%. ↑ 3
4. **True.** ↑ 4
5. **True.** ↑ 5
6. **False.** it is false. PMNDP provides dialysis. PM-JAY is the insurance scheme. ↑ 6
7. **True.** ↑ 7

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