CVD Prevention: How Low to Go in 2009?

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In a world population of around 6 billion, some 17 million deaths occur from CVD each year... and around 80% of them occur in Emerging/ Developing economies. In addition, some 20 million people survive a heart attack or stroke each year, and their risk for further CV events remain 5-8 times greater.

We acknowledge the concept of 'lower is better' for management of key cardiovascular risk factors – such as LDL-Cholesterol, blood pressure, salt intake and BMI. The INTERHEART study emphasizes the impact of established risk factors in all populations, and various International guidelines have set suggested goals/targets for such factors. Compounding this is the debate of 'genes versus environment' in causation of CVD.

Concerted efforts need to be maintained to encourage healthier lifestyles, a focus on primary prevention and addressing the particular needs of individual populations – taking into account cultural variations, metabolism issues and socio-economic factors. In parallel the importance of aggressive secondary prevention – whether CV intervention, pharmaco-therapy or cardiac rehabilitation – for those suffering a first or recurrent CV event, remains.

How stringent we address the CV prevention targets, as we approach year 2009, will be discussed and reflected upon.

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