

Two case studies: Developed and developing economies

Inequalities in access to primary and secondary prevention programmes, as well as to cardiac interventions, exist within countries. Societies at different stages of economic development face different challenges, as illustrated by the cases of India and the event's host country, South Korea.



"We have a long way to go ... but our effort will continue to provide a better service to the rural areas."

HYUN-YOUNG PARK

Director, division of
cardiovascular disease

Korea National Institute of Health

South Korea

South Korea is a wealthy country that, like China and Japan, faces the major challenge of a rapidly ageing population. According to the EIU, it has a relatively comprehensive strategic plan for heart health, but deficits in implementation. The country promotes awareness of the need to stop smoking and the harmful effects of alcohol, and of the dangers to people at high risk, such as those with diabetes or high blood pressure. South Korea is also known as a pioneer in value-based health care. Yet, it lags in advocacy and e-health. Hyun-Young Park, director of the cardiovascular disease division at the Korea National Institute of Health, explained that the government is also trying to solve disparities in the level of care available to rural and urban populations.



"When they say heart disease is a global disease, it truly is. It doesn't seem to discriminate between socio-economic strata as much as you would think."

SEVITH RAO

Founder and managing trustee
Indian Heart Association

India

Sevith Rao, founder and managing trustee of the Indian Heart Association, explained how his father's heart attack had encouraged him to look into the causes of heart disease in India. It turns out that South Asians are genetically predisposed to heart problems, and the average Indian diet is less healthy than people imagine. Rapid changes in the kinds of work people do have also had a huge impact on health. After finding this out, Mr Rao founded a charity that focuses on education on prevention, advocacy and testing in cities and, increasingly, rural areas, using social media to spread the message.

Heart disease is also becoming more of a priority for the Indian government. The country's ability to deliver heart surgery at very low costs has become well-known. The public-health system provides surgery for free and its private hospitals even attract overseas patients.