

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Ways to restore harmony and reduce stress

MD RAJIB HOSSAIN

It is an ongoing challenge to reduce stress and maintain harmony in our life. Finding work-life balance in today's frenetically-paced world is no simple task. Every now and then, we are facing various challenges in our work places and also in personal life.

By facing constant challenges and problems it is really difficult to concentrate on our job. When your work life and personal life feel out of balance, stress and its harmful effects are the result.

Striking the best work-life balance

It is not easy to juggle the demands of career and personal life. To take control, first consider how the world of work has changed, then re-evaluate your relationship with work and apply these strategies for striking a more healthy balance.

Here are some ideas to help find the balance:

Keep a log: Track everything you do for one week. Include work-related and non-work-related activities. Decide what are neces-

sary and satisfy you the most. Cut activities you do not enjoy. Do not have time for or do only out of guilt. If you do not have the authority to make certain decisions, talk to your supervisor.

Take advantage of your options: Find out if your employer offers flex hours – a compressed work week, job-sharing for your role. The flexibility may alleviate some of your stress and free up some time.

Manage your time: Organise household tasks efficiently. Doing one or two loads of laundry every day rather than saving it all for your day off, and running errands in batches rather than going back and forth several times are good places to begin.

A weekly family calendar of important dates and a daily list of to-dos will help you avoid deadline panic. If your employer offers a course in time management, sign up for it.

Communicate clearly: Limit time-consuming misunderstandings by communicating clearly and listening carefully. Take notes if it helps.

Fight the guilt: Remember,

Balance does not mean doing everything. Examine your priorities and set boundaries. Be firm in what you can do and what you cannot.

having a family and a job is okay for both men and women.

Nurture yourself: Set aside time each day for an activity that you enjoy, such as walking, working out or listening to music. Unwind after a hectic workday by reading, practicing yoga or taking a bath or shower.

Protect your day off: Try to schedule some of your routine chores on workdays so that your days off are more relaxing.

Set aside one night each week for recreation: Take the



friend or co-worker to talk with during times of stress or hardship. If you are part of a religious community, take advantage of the support your religious leader can provide. Ensure you have trusted friends and relatives who can assist you when you need to work overtime or travel for your job.

Seek professional help: Everyone needs help from time to time. If your life feels too chaotic to manage and you are spinning your wheels worrying about it, consult with a professional such as a doctor, a psychologist or a counselor.

Overtime obsession: If you work overtime for financial reasons or to climb the corporate ladder, do so in moderation. Most importantly, say no when you are too tired, when it is affecting your health or when you have crucial family obligations.

Balance does not mean doing everything. Examine your priorities and set boundaries. Be firm in what you can do and what you cannot. Only you can restore harmony to your lifestyle.

Get enough sleep: There is nothing as stressful and potentially dangerous as working when you are sleep-deprived. Not only is your productivity affected, but you can also make costly mistakes. You may then have to work even more hours to make up for these mistakes.

Booster your support system: Give yourself the gift of a trusted

ULTRASONIC TONSILLECTOMY

Bloodless hi-tech surgery

PROF DR M ALAMGIR CHOWDHURY

Inflammation of the tonsil is called tonsillitis. It is relatively a common disease. Bacteria like *Streptococci*, *Pneumococcus* and *Haemophilus* usually cause it. It can occur at any age, but more common in children. According to severity and duration of infection, tonsillitis is of two types, such as acute and chronic.

Clinical features

Pain in the throat is the commonest complaint in tonsillitis. Both tonsils are enlarged due to repeated infections but may be atrophic (small size) due to fibrosis. Neck glands (tonsillar) may be enlarged and palpable. Normal physical and mental development of the child may be impaired due to the inflammation. Many complications may arise from tonsillitis like peritonsillar abscess, rheumatic fever, rheumatic heart disease, diseases of kidney (glomerulonephritis) etc.

When tonsil is to be operated

Acute infection of tonsil could be treated by medicine (antibiotics). But tonsillectomy is indicated in chronic tonsillitis with acute exacerbation of at least 5-6 times in a year or having chronic tonsillitis for many years.

Huge enlargement of the tonsils causing mechanical obstruction to swallowing and sleep disturbance of the children, sudden unilateral enlargement of tonsil when there is suspicion of malignancy, tuberculosis of tonsil and for many other reasons tonsillectomy is indicated.

Method of tonsil operation

There are many methods of tonsil operation like Dissection method, Electrocautery, Laser, Coblation, Ultrasonic, Cryo-surgery, Guillotine method.

Dissection method is very popular worldwide.



During operation in this method some bleeding occurs and blood vessels are to be stitched to stop bleeding.

Laser, coblation and cryo-surgery are of high-tech operations and very expensive which need trained expert surgeon.

Guillotine method is becoming obsolete now-a-days due to its complications.

Now ultrasonic tonsil operation is performed in our country.

Advantages of ultrasonic tonsil operation In this method, precise excision of tonsil is possible. There is no bleeding at all. It is safer and modern. The patient may drink orally immediately after operation and will get quick recovery. The patient can start his/her work within few days.

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The writer is a Professor and Head, Department of ENT of Medical College for Women and Hospital, Uttara, Dhaka.

Arteries heal after quitting smoking

Early signs of heart disease in young adult smokers may quickly dissipate soon after they kick the habit, a new study shows.

Smoking disrupts the normal function of the lining of arteries, known as the endothelium, which must contract and relax to regulate blood flow. This can promote the development of atherosclerosis (condition where deposits of fats and minerals form on the walls of an artery) or cause hardening of the arteries, thereby increasing the risk of heart attack and stroke, according to the report.

The researchers used positron emission tomography or "PET" imaging to examine the effects of smoking cessation on the blood flow in the coronary arteries of 15 men in their twenties and thirties who reported smoking an average of 20 cigarettes per day for more than 5 years and agreed to stop smoking for at least 6 months.

The finding that young healthy smokers have impaired artery function but that it is reversible within a month after smoking cessation, supports the value of quitting smoking to ward off heart disease in young adults, the investigators say.

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Source: The Journal of Nuclear Medicine

Rheumatic fever in children

DR M KARIM KHAN

Mala, a 7-year-old girl came with fever, painful swelling of the right knee and left elbow with palpitation. She was suffering from throat sore and fever for 3 weeks. After proper physical and laboratory investigations, she was diagnosed as a case of acute rheumatic fever. This is the usual presentation of rheumatic fever.

Rheumatic fever is potentially a dangerous disease because it may cause permanent damage to the heart valves and eventually may cause death if left untreated.

Rheumatic fever is diagnosed by a special criteria known as Duckett Jones criteria. It is divided into Major and Minor criteria.

Major criteria include carditis (Inflammation of the heart), Migratory polyarthritits, Sydenham's chorea (involuntary repeated purposeless movement of the limbs), Erythema marginatum (some maculopapular rash on the neck/area) and Subcutaneous nodules (painful small swelling below the skin over the bony prominence).

And the Minor criteria include Fever, Arthralgia (painful joint but no swelling or redness), Elevated ESR, C-reactive protein, Prolonged PR interval on ECG, History of previous rheumatic fever.

Besides, few more points should be considered. They are history of previous sore throat by

streptococcus, confirmed by throat swab examination, rising ASO (antistreptolysin O) titer, history of scarlet fever.

In our country there is a belief among general public that rise in ASO titer means rheumatic fever, which is a wrong idea.

Two major criteria, or one major and two minor criteria, when there is also evidence of a previous strep infection support the diagnosis of rheumatic fever.

Most important aspect of the disease is prevention. It can be easily prevented by treating sore throat with oral penicillin or by injection of Benzathine penicillin.

But once there is rheumatic fever, measures (by medication and other medical advice) for prolong time should be maintained to prevent valvular heart disease.

When there is sore throat without runny nose or coryza (disease in which the patient sneezes and coughs and has a blocked and running nose), give oral penicillin to your children according to a physician to prevent rheumatic fever in future. Besides, personal hygiene should also be maintained properly.

Rheumatic fever is a preventable disease. Prevent it and save your children from the deadly rheumatic heart disease.

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Nutrition Corner

FAQ on Triglycerides

DR TURIN CHOWDHURY

Now-a-days people are becoming more and more concerned about their food habit especially regarding cholesterol.

This is indeed a good sign. But there is not much awareness regarding triglycerides (TG). But TG is as much important as cholesterol is. Here are some frequently asked questions about TG which helps us live a healthier life by reducing the risk of heart attacks and stroke.

What is TG?

TG is a type of fat or lipid that is crucial to many metabolic processes in our body same as cholesterol.

How do we get TG?

We get TG in two ways. One way is that our body produces TG by itself and the second way is derived from the fatty food which we consume.

After we eat, our body metabolism converts the food contents into energy for use by the body cells. Extra calories ingested with meal which are not used immediately by tissues are converted into TG and are transported to fat cells to be stored.

Effect of TG

Increased level of blood TG is associated with the build-up of plaques that can narrow or even block blood vessels. As a consequence if the vessels of the heart are blocked, there are less blood and oxygen to the heart.

This can lead to chest pain and heart attacks. A blocked blood vessel in the brain can trigger a stroke.

The plaque layer of artery can also develop rough edges. The flowing blood can cause a part of the thick hard deposit to break off or detach and travel as thrombus. Ultimately it can obstruct blood vessels elsewhere in the body and cause cell death due to ischemia, leading to medical emergencies like heart attacks and strokes.

Symptoms

The dangerous part of increased TG level in the body is – the condition does not produce immediate symptoms. There are no warning signs for high TG levels. Therefore, it can remain undiagnosed for a long time in a person with higher level of TG. All adults should get their TG tested every five years.

Risk factors

Medical Update

Scan detects child heart killer

A medical scan can spot which young people risk sudden death because of a weak heart.

The scan shows up heart scar tissue, giving doctors an important warning sign of dilated cardiomyopathy (heart muscle disease) or DCM, which can otherwise go undetected. In DCM the heart becomes weakened and enlarged, and cannot pump blood efficiently. It is the most common form of heart muscle disease at any age and many of those who die are children.

The new technique, developed by cardiologists at Royal Brompton Hospital,

Diet: There are two dietary factors associated with increased blood cholesterol levels:

- Eating foods that are high in saturated fats.
- Eating foods containing high levels of carbohydrates.

Weight: People who are overweight are more likely to have high blood TG.

Genetics: Some people are genetically predisposed to having high levels of TG. This tendency towards high blood TG level is often passed on genetically towards the offspring.

Other diseases: Increased TG level and its complications can be aggravated by some chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure etc.

Lifestyle: Factors that affect TG levels also include high levels of stress, cigarette smoking, less physical work out etc.

Lowering TG levels

Diet modification: Taking the followings in consideration can be useful.

- Reduce amount of carbohydrate in the food habit.
- Increase the amounts of fresh fruit, vegetables in daily diet.

Limit the amount of saturated fats in the diet. Take measures like removing the skin from chicken and eat lean cuts of meat.

Drink skim or low-fat milk. Use also skim or low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt in cooking.

Use liquid or soft margarine or vegetable oils.

Eat egg whites rather than egg yolks.

Lifestyle modification:

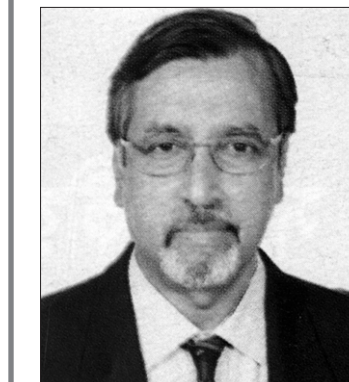
- Lose excess body fat
- Loose weight
- Get lots of exercise everyday. Some examples of good ways to exercise include walking, household work, running, swimming, jumping rope, and bicycling.
- Stop smoking or excessive drinking.
- If someone is suffering from other chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, keeping those in control.

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Your Doctor

Dentistry



Prof Dr Motiur Rahman Molla
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Dear doctor,
My 8-month-old son is getting his first teeth but the teeth have a black tint as they are coming through.

What may cause this? Is this a normal phenomenon and will disappear in course of time?
Regards
Samia Kamal
Dhaka

Answer:
Normally baby's primary teeth are off-white in colour. Baby teeth can become discolored for many reasons.

The most common cause is taking an antibiotic – Tetracycline. If the mother is treated by Tetracycline during her pregnancy, the baby may develop black teeth. Inadequate brushing is also an important cause which allows bacteria to form plaque on the

surface of teeth. Liquid medications containing iron, such as supplemental vitamins given to infants, also can cause dark stains. Other causes of discoloration include:

- Jaundice in newborns, which may cause a yellow or greenish tint.
- Excessive fluoride (fluorosis), which may cause bright white spots.
- Injury to teeth, which may result in a pink or grayish tint.
- Chronic illness or recurrent fevers.

To prevent the buildup of bacteria in your baby's mouth, run a damp washcloth over your baby's gums after feedings. When your baby's first teeth appear, start using a soft children's toothbrush twice a day at 6 months after that.

Children should have their first dentist appointment at about age 3 years earlier if problems occur.

Baby bottles can also create problems for your child's teeth. When liquids such as milk or juice stay in contact with the teeth for long period, the sugar may cause tooth decay. To prevent this:

- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle, unless it contains plain water.
- Do not let your child walk around with a bottle during the day.

Fortunately, normal permanent teeth often replace discolored baby teeth. Even if discoloration persists in permanent teeth, a dentist can remove these stains. If you have concerns about your baby's teeth, consult with dentist.

Psychiatry



Dr Dewan Abdur Rahim
Professor and Head
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Enam Medical College, Saver.

Dear doctor,
I am currently a college student and unhappy for my behaviour.

During my whole high school life and my current college life, I have found it difficult to make friends and I feel an inner tightness or anxiety when I talk to most of my peers. I never feel comfortable around them.

When I go to a party I always have a feeling of being out of place. It seems to always be a constant struggle to maintain a good conversation.

I constantly feel alone, isolated and rejected. Do I

need to consult a specialist? Any help or advice for you would be a great help.

Regards
Aminal Azim
Dhanmondi
Dhaka

Answer:
According to your statement, it can be said that you are suffering from anxiety problem. We term it social phobia.

Persons with social phobia experience many symptoms of anxiety (including but not limited to embarrassment, sweating, trembling etc.) when they are in social situations. Often, these persons also experience a fear of negative evaluation –

their attention becomes so highly focused on what others around them might be thinking about them that they find it hard to pay attention to the conversation they are having.

There are several excellent forms of psychotherapy that are well studied and known to work very well in treating the disorder. I recommend that you need a medical checkup under the guidance of a psychiatrist to rule out any possible medical reason for why you might be so anxious.

A psychiatrist can prescribe medications to lower your anxiety if this is absolutely necessary.