

COVID-19: money, mind and beyond

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While having no promising success so far against the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), social distancing and quarantine are the only preventive measures advised by experts around the world. The idea is simple as you are not carrying the baton for letting the virus spread in your community. The devastating Coronavirus-show is already long enough that put everyone in critical thinking and wonder what now?

By far you have heard a lot about vaccines or drugs against COVID-19, how much have you grasped for your mental health? It is not just some sort of chemical imbalance that causes stress or depression. Stressful life events, dysregulation of mood by the brain and genetic vulnerability are also major sources of impaired mental health that exist in this pandemic.

Unfortunately for some during this pandemic, it is either Coronavirus or hunger to choose from. Some experts made a daunting speculation that this pandemic driven economic recession will be worse than ever as countries covering more than fifty percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are under lockdown. Unprecedented distortion in the circular flow of economic activities is plummeting people's positive energy.

Hence, this is not the best time for worshipping any economic theory, either be it neoclassical (naturally driven economic rehabilitation with minimum



government influence) or Keynesian (government-backed and fast-paced). Experts rather emphasise on the mobility of money where it should reach all the catalysts of the economy especially the struggling and deprived ones. Although coronavirus itself may move around traceless, the havoc of diminished financial stability is now evident and imprinting its effect on people's psyche. Any decision-making fiasco either for prolonged lockdown or getting back to work will just worsen the burden.

Our lifestyle needs a bit of tuning so that we move along with an apparent healthy living. Quarantine takes a deep

toll on our mood presenting a weird kind of boredom. Boredom and stress provoke people towards overeating, for many the sugary "comfort foods".

Imbalance in dietary choice driven by the craving for any specific food includes emotional, behavioural, cognitive or psychological process. Although carbohydrate-rich foods promote the 'happy hormone' serotonin production which stimulates our mood, it also triggers a higher glycaemic index with consequent obesity and diabetes down the line.

Sleep disturbance or change in circadian rhythm adds another level of stress. Foods rich in serotonin and sleep-promoting amino acid melatonin for dinner may

help. Having a considerable portion of veggies, fruits and leafy greens are good options. This also provides tryptophan, the precursor of serotonin and melatonin. Just maintaining the basics ensuring good sources of immuno-supportive nutrients with vitamins, antioxidants, balance of macro and micronutrients may help you fight the impaired immune response and activate your natural mechanism against any infection or altered mental health.

In addition, not going out means less exposure to the sun, leading to reduced vitamin D levels. Replenishing vitamin D may be available from a brief walk around when the sun is up or from vitamin D rich foods like commonly found poultry options.

The positive association of a balanced diet and exercise with good mental health are plenty. The last option for improved mental health is going through medication under expert hands. Again, this is nothing new as many people already went through a similar situation. In the end, mental health matters big time.

The trauma from the invisible virus haunting us everyday demands extra empathy for our own. It may sound cliché but empathy, compassion and self-care should now be the most talked and practiced life events to go the extra mile in this pandemic.

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HERPES



Billions worldwide living with herpes

About half a billion people worldwide are living with genital herpes, and several billion have an oral herpes infection, new estimates show, highlighting the need to improve awareness and scale up services to prevent and treat herpes.

About 13% of the world's population aged 15 to 49 years were living with herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2) infection in 2016, the latest year for which data is available. HSV-2 is almost exclusively sexually transmitted, causing genital herpes. Infection can lead to recurring, often painful, genital sores in up to a third of people infected.

Herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) is mainly transmitted by oral to oral contact to cause oral herpes infection – sometimes leading to painful sores in or around the mouth ("cold sores"). However, HSV-1 can also be transmitted to the genital area through oral sex, causing genital herpes.

Around 67% of the world's population aged 0 to 49 had HSV-1 infection in 2016 – an estimated 3.7 billion people. Most of these infections were oral; however, between 122 million to 192 million people were estimated to have genital HSV-1 infection.

Genital herpes is a substantial health concern worldwide – beyond the potential pain and discomfort suffered by people living with the infection, the associated social consequences can have a profound effect on sexual and reproductive health. There is no cure for herpes. Antiviral medications, such as acyclovir, famciclovir, and valacyclovir, can help to reduce the severity and frequency of symptoms but cannot cure the infection.

HEALTH bulletin



Vigorous activity or sedentary behaviour is not associated with risk for knee osteoarthritis

Patients and some clinicians still are concerned that physical activity, particularly vigorous physical activity, might be associated with excess risk for knee osteoarthritis (OA), despite considerable evidence to the contrary.

Researchers revisited the issue in a prospective cohort of 1,194 adults (mean age, 58; mean body-mass index [BMI], 27 kg/m²) who were at high risk for developing knee OA based on weight, history of knee injury or knee surgery, lack of confidence in knee stability, and modified lifestyle due to concerns about knee damage.

About 13% of patients developed incident knee OA during as long as 10 years of follow-up. In analyses adjusted for age, sex, and BMI, no physical activity trajectory or sitting pattern was associated significantly with knee OA. Patients classified as having low-to-moderate physical activity, compared with those who undertook no exercise, had a nearly significant lower risk for knee OA.

Clinicians should be comfortable encouraging patients to pursue at least low-to-moderate levels of physical activity for its known metabolic and cardiovascular benefits, without concern about excess risk for knee OA. Such activity might even provide protection against knee OA.

Treating cancer during COVID-19

PROF DR KAZI MANZUR KADER

People with cancer appear to be at increased risk of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and their outcomes are worse than those of individuals without cancer. This is especially valid for cancer patients with other diseases like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease etc.

Evidence from China suggests that oncological patients are quite vulnerable to infection due to their compromised immune system as a result of both cancer and active cancer therapy like chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Many cancer patients are elderly and more susceptible to aggressive coronavirus infection.

The constraints created by the pandemic have required health care professionals to make difficult choices, including those we made in drawing up prioritisation criteria to guide treatment decisions. Patients with potentially curable disease who could substantially benefit from treatment are given priority, whereas care for patients who were being treated with palliative intent, especially those for whom interventions are expected to have marginal benefit, is being deferred.

Decisions about care for individual patients are made by balancing the risk that patients will contract COVID-19 because of exposures associated with cancer treatment and their risk for complications if they do, with the benefits of receiving potentially life-saving cancer treatment.

In this pandemic, treatment should be given to cancer patients after the evaluation of all clinical situations with precaution. For example, if a patient has



locally advanced breast cancer, chemotherapy is required first for downsizing the tumour to make it operable and prevent the spread. Sometimes after surgery, adjuvant radiotherapy is required which will provide a good response to surgery, if not there is a chance of local recurrence and metastasis.

Considering the patient's condition, chemotherapy dose can be modified with prophylactic growth factor. The interval between the cycles of chemotherapy may be prolonged than the usual gap in consultation with the oncologist.

Proper nutrition with a balanced diet and antioxidant-rich food may ensure multiple ways to support cancer patients by increasing treatment effectiveness, decreasing treatment toxicities, increasing treatment tolerance, decreasing disease progression, and ultimately increasing the quality of life and better survival chances.

Patients should try to increasing immunity by having a balanced diet that includes an adequate amount of

fish, meat, egg, milk, vegetables and fruits. To control associated diseases like diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease etc., by taking regular medications, proper diet and regular exercise.

Cancer patients should take maximum precautions against COVID-19 by using facial masks when going out, maintaining social distance, staying at home, washing hands with soap repeatedly, avoid touching nose, eyes and mouth as much as possible.

In conclusion, the novel coronavirus pandemic is a battle between people and viruses. Delivering care for patients with cancer during this crisis is challenging given the competing risks of death from cancer versus death or serious complications from COVID-19. All health care professionals should dedicatedly move forward with courage and take care of cancer patients accordingly.

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Convalescent plasma therapy available in Dhaka to combat COVID-19

Evercare Hospital Dhaka has conducted the first ever convalescent plasma (CP) therapy in Bangladesh recently, says a press release. Successfully conducted in many developed countries recently, this therapy is a promising research treatment to combat the global pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

"COVID-19 infected patients in serious condition require Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and ventilator support. In addition to their regular treatment, research is being conducted worldwide to combat COVID-19, where one of the most promising treatments is convalescent plasma therapy", said Dr Abu Jafar Mohammed Saleh, Coordinator and Senior Consultant of Haematology and Stem Cell Transplant at Evercare Hospital Dhaka.



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HOW TO HOME QUARANTINE

The home quarantined person should:

Stay in a well-ventilated single-room preferably with an attached toilet

Needs to stay away from elderly people, pregnant women, children

Restrict his/her movement within the house

Under no circumstances attend any social/religious gathering

Wash hand frequently with soap and water or with alcohol-based sanitizer

Avoid sharing household items like dishes, glasses, cups, utensils, towels, bedding

Wear a surgical mask at all time. The mask should be changed every 8-8 hours

Dispose off used mask in a closed bin and bin should also be handled responsibly

If symptoms appear, he/she should immediately inform the nearest health centre

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