

Happy Heart Day

A slight discomfort in the chest, and I immediately imagine an impending heart attack, not thinking twice that it could easily be some other ailment.

The symptoms of a heart attack can include tightness, uncomfortable pressure or pain at the centre of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, a radiating pain in the left (or both) arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach; shortness of breath, cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness.

I feel that I am experiencing all these symptoms at one point or another, and almost like a hypochondriac, believe something bad might happen to me any time. Being middle aged and obese, I repeatedly go through the 'the boy who cried wolf' syndrome, and to make matters worse, I hear that silent heart attacks are



more common in women, and far deadlier.

A silent heart attack has either no symptoms, minimal symptoms, or unrecognised symptoms. It is not always as obvious as pain in the chest, shortness of breath, and cold sweats. In case of regular heart attacks, women are likelier to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain. In fact, a heart attack can actually happen without a person knowing it!

I have an information dysfunction regarding heart diseases and thus, the confusion in me. Yet, like most woman I know, I disregard these symptoms as soon as they seem to pass, the thought of consulting a physician hardly ever crossing my mind. I am sure there are many like me

out there who heard or read too much, but women in general are careless when it comes to health care.

To this fact, Dr N A M Momenuzzaman, eminent cardiologist at United Hospital, added the following observation. "Females in our country suffer from uncontrolled diabetes, obesity, hypertension, yet they hardly complain or take proper care of themselves."

"Disease presentation or reporting, in case of female patients, is very late in most cases. If a woman felt uneasiness at night, she will report to the family member in the morning, whereas a man will most likely share immediately, and be taken to the hospital by the woman of the house. Women tend to push treatment, thus the time lapse results in treatment variation," Dr Momenuzzaman adds.

By nature of propagation, we women are

attuned to dealing with adverse situations, but health wise we hardly complain, busying ourselves forever with the welfare of the family.

However, it does not take being a doctor to realise that heart attacks are life threatening. We must keep ourselves abreast of correct information, lead a healthy life, and most importantly, prioritise ourselves and seek medical help whenever necessary. Like men, women too should be aware of cardiac diseases and their symptoms, and understand that a moment's reluctance can be a matter of life and death.

In 1999, the World Heart Federation (WHF), along with the World Health Organization (WHO), announced the designation of World Heart Day. Until 2011, it was observed on the last Sunday of September, with the first celebration taking place on 24 September, 2000.

World Heart Day celebration on 29 September is intended to increase public awareness of cardiovascular diseases (CVD), including their prevention and their global impact.

As CVDs are the most common cause of death globally, it is high time we give this the attention it deserves.

Having a healthy heart is as straightforward as making some lifestyle changes. So, this week, Star Lifestyle is bringing out a special supplement with loads of interesting reads. Apart from attempting to learn more about cardiac diseases, we present the lighter side of some of the most eminent cardiologists and cardiac surgeons in the country.

We wish you all a happy heart day!

— RBR

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Model: Rashid Ahmed

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