

Scope for massive scale-up of investment in mental health

STAR HEALTH DESK

World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year, with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilising efforts in support of mental health.

Mental health is one of the most neglected areas of public health. Close to 1 billion people are living with a mental disorder, 3 million people die every year from the harmful use of alcohol and one person dies every 40 seconds by suicide. And now, billions of people around the world have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is having a further impact on people's mental health.

Yet, relatively few people around the world have access to quality mental health services. In low- and middle-income countries, more than 75% of people with mental, neurological and substance use disorders receive no treatment for their condition at all. Furthermore, stigma, discrimination, punitive legislation and human rights abuses are still widespread.

The limited access to quality, affordable mental health care in the world before the pandemic, and particularly in humanitarian emergencies and conflict settings, has been further diminished due to COVID-19 as the pandemic has disrupted health services around the world.

Primary causes have been infection and the risk of infection in long-stay facilities such as care homes and psychiatric



institutions; barriers to meeting people face-to-face; mental health staff being infected with the virus; and the closing of mental health facilities to convert them into care facilities for people with COVID-19.

Move for mental health: let's invest
On this year's World Mental Health Day, the World Health Organisation (WHO), together with partner organisations, United for Global Mental Health and the World Federation for Mental Health, is calling for a massive scale-up in

investment in mental health.

During the past few months, WHO has issued guidance and advice on mental health for health workers and other frontline workers, managers of health facilities, and people of all ages whose lives have changed considerably as a result of the pandemic. With the disruption in health services, countries are finding innovative ways to provide mental health care, and initiatives to strengthen psychosocial support have sprung up. Yet, because of the scale of the problem, the vast majority of mental health needs

remain unaddressed. The response is hampered by chronic under-investment in mental health promotion, prevention and care for many years before the pandemic.

Countries spend just 2% of their health budgets on mental health

Countries spend on average only 2% of their health budgets on mental health. Despite some increases in recent years, international development assistance for mental health has never exceeded 1% of all development assistance for health. This is despite the fact that for every US\$ 1 invested in scaled-up treatment for common mental disorders such as depression and anxiety, there is a return of US\$ 5 in improved health and productivity.

World Mental Health Day: an opportunity to commit

The World Mental Health Day campaign offers opportunities, primarily online given the continuing pandemic, for all of us to do something life-affirming: as individuals, to take concrete actions in support of our own mental health, and to support friends and family who are struggling; as employers, to take steps towards putting in place employee wellness programmes; as governments, to commit to establishing or scaling-up mental health services; and as journalists, to explain what more can and must be done to make mental health care a reality for everyone.

Source: World Health Organisation (WHO)

DID YOU KNOW?



Heat has a stronger effect on health in less developed cities

Compared to high income cities, less developed cities in Brazil have a higher hospitalisation rate associated with increased heat exposure, according to a new study published recently in PLOS Medicine by Yuming Guo of the Monash University, Australia, and colleagues.

Heat exposure, which will increase with global warming, is associated with increases in mortality and morbidity but little is known about the socioeconomic disparities in vulnerability to heat. In the new study, researchers collected daily hospitalisation and climate data in the hot season during 2000 through 2015 from 1,814 Brazilian cities covering 78.4% of the Brazilian population. 49 million hospitalisations were studied.

For cities of lower middle income, as classified by the World Bank, every 5°C increase in daily mean temperature during the hot season was associated with 5.1% increase in all-cause hospitalisation; and for cities of middle income, every 5°C temperature increase was associated with a 3.7% increase in hospitalisation. While for cities of high income, the temperature increase was only associated with a 2.6% increase in hospitalisation.

"Increasing heat exposure along with global warming could be a potential driver for exacerbating inter-city health inequalities," the authors say.

HEALTH bulletin



Early physical therapy for acute back pain and sciatica improves disability

Patients with acute low back pain and sciatica who are referred early to physical therapy see improved outcomes at 6 months, according to a randomised trial in the Annals of Internal Medicine.

Some 200 adults who presented to primary care with low back pain and sciatica that had lasted no more than 90 days received education about low back pain either alone (usual care) or with a referral to start physical therapy within 3 days. Physical therapy included six to eight sessions over 4 weeks, plus home exercises.

The primary outcome — the change in patient-reported disability at 6 months — significantly favored physical therapy over usual care (mean reduction: 22.4 points vs. 17.0 points on a 100-point scale). The difference between groups persisted at 1 year. Several secondary outcomes, including self-rated back pain, also favored physical therapy.

Editorialists call the observed effects of physical therapy "average, modest, but nevertheless, beneficial."

The adverse effect of overuse of hand sanitizer

PROF M KARIM KHAN

We all know that the COVID-19 pandemic situation is the new normal that is going to be here for quite some time. To keep the disease away, we are asked to wear a mask, wash our hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a sanitiser and maintain social distance. We all are trying to keep ourselves safe by following the mentioned health rules and are being benefited as well.

The use of hand sanitisers has increased a lot after the COVID-19 outbreak and to some extent, we are using it too much. Some of us have become obsessed with it. There are various types of hand sanitisers available in Bangladesh. Some are in gel, some as liquid and some of them are in spray form. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has prescribed the ingredients of hand sanitisers. It should be Ethyl alcohol or isopropyl alcohol based but it should never contain methyl alcohol, or commonly known as methanol.

There are many side effects of using the hand sanitizer, such as ocular irritation, vomiting, conjunctivitis, oral irritation, cough, metabolic acidosis, respiratory depression and rarely hypoglycaemia. Excessive use of hand sanitisers may weaken our immunity by reducing our exposure to the commensal organism. Sanitiser cannot be used for disinfecting vegetables and fruits. Sanitiser should not be put inside

vehicles as they are flammable products, they can explode due to the hot temperature inside the vehicle cabin. Hand sanitiser also increase the risk of eczema and various skin infections.

Children after using hand sanitiser can eat with their hands, even if they lick their hands it will not cause any notable harm. Using methanol in disinfectant and hand sanitiser is not acceptable and it is very injurious to health, it can even be fatal.

To prevent the spread of the coronavirus, the Centres for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and if soap and water are not available, alcohol-based sanitiser may be used as an alternative.

So it is important for everyone to be rational in using hand sanitiser. Use them only when necessary and sparingly to avoid the risks.

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Evercare Hospital Dhaka started post COVID-19 recovery clinic

Evercare Hospital Dhaka has recently started a post COVID-19 respiratory recovery clinic to help post COVID-19 patients continue their journey to recovery, says a press release.

Evercare Hospital Dhaka's post COVID-19 recovery clinic services include pulmonary care and rehabilitation, pulmonary physiologic testing, pulmonary imaging, rehabilitation, psychiatric and social services as well as research studies related to COVID-19.

The clinic also supports home recovery including multi-disciplinary involvement for medical complications for heart issues such as arrhythmia and myocardial dysfunction, as well as support for issues related to prolonged ICU stay such as loss of muscle, myopathy, neuropathy, anxiety and depression.

  /StarHealthBD



Rumors and Misconceptions Unveiled

Can COVID – 19 be transmitted in areas with hot and humid climates?

- The COVID- 19 virus can be transmitted in any climate, including areas with hot and humid weather.

The best and most effective way to protect yourself against COVID-19 is by maintaining physical distance of at least 1 metre from others and frequently cleaning your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water.

By doing this you eliminate viruses that may be on your hands and avoid infection that could occur by then touching your eyes, mouth and nose.

Can cold weather kill the new corona virus?

- There is no reason to believe that cold weather can kill the new corona virus or other diseases.

The normal human body temperature remains around 36.5 to 37 °C, regardless of the external temperature or weather.

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