

Researchers claim cancer therapy alternative

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan researchers said on Thursday they have successfully tested 10 new sugar-fat compounds they believe will inhibit cancer growth while prolonging patients' survival time with limited side effects.

The new compounds were created by a team led by Dr Wong Chi-huey, president of Taiwan's highest academic research body, the Academia Sinica, and an expert in the structure and function of sugars.

"This is an innovative strategy in cancer treatment. So far, most anti-cancer drugs are associated with side-effects like nausea and hair loss," said Alice Yu, who led a team to validate the compounds.

"But the new (compounds) are expected to cause few side-effects as they are designed to enhance immunity rather than attack cancer cells."

The new compounds are an improvement on one called a-Galcer, which was discovered in Japan in 1995.

At least 10 of the new compounds had proved effective in experiments with mice, Academia Sinica said.

The study showed that lung cancer-bearing mice treated with the new compound had significantly prolonged survival time compared to those treated with a-Galcer, the research institute said in a statement.

The Japanese research did not go beyond a phase I trial because while A-Galcer was found to enhance immunity by helping some proteins, it also damaged other proteins, thus suppressing immune functions. Overall the anti-cancer results were weak.

However, Taiwan's experiments showed that mice treated with the new compounds for six weeks appeared to be in better health.

In breast cancer-bearing mice, treatment with the new compounds had inhibited tumor growth in 75 percent of the group, compared to 50 percent inhibition of tumor growths in mice treated with a-Galcer.



Children take part in an art competition at Shishu Academy in the city yesterday. Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the competition on the occasion of the First National Health Rights Conference that ended yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Tk 51cr budget for Jamalpur pourashava

UNB, Jamalpur

A Tk 51.52 crore budget for Jamalpur pourashava has been announced for 2007-08 fiscal without imposing any new tax.

Pourashava Chairman Shah M Wares Ali Mamun announced the surplus budget at its auditorium in presence of local elite and journalists on Thursday.

In the proposed budget, the revenue earnings and government grants were estimated at Tk 51.52 crore while the expenditures at Tk 44.60 crore.

The chairman said adequate amount has been earmarked in the budget for solving waterlogging problem and construction of a park.

Insufficient sleep increases risk of cardiovascular disease: Study

AFP, Chicago

Chronic sleep deprivation can do more than leave you short-tempered: it can also stress your heart and raise your risk of cardiovascular disease and death, according to a study released Wednesday.

The neurological and behavioural effects of long-term sleep loss have been well-documented, ranging from lowered concentration and hand-eye coordination to poor mood.

But the study by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine adds to a growing body of evidence that there is also a physiological price to be paid for insufficient time under the sheets.

The study found that a sleep deficit built up over just five nights can significantly stress the heart.

The researchers tested the cardiac function of their 39 volunteers twice -- once at the beginning of the study, after a night of 10 hours' sleep, and again after five nights when they got a mere four hours of shut-eye each night.

The electrocardiograms revealed that all of the volunteers had a much faster heart beat and significantly less heart rate variability following the nights of sleep deprivation.

Heart rate variability describes the naturally occurring beat-to-beat changes in heart rate which reflect the body's adjustment to a host of stresses and stimuli.

Reduced variability can be a marker for cardiac problems and other diseases and has been linked to high blood pressure.

"The effect of the sleep deficit

was to increase the stress on the hearts of these volunteers," said Siobhan Banks, a lead author on the study.

"If our finding is sustained by a larger group and further analysis, it may suggest why short sleep duration is associated with a heightened risk of cardiovascular disease and mortality."

The findings are consistent with previous research showing that shift workers are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease due to the fact that they get less sleep because of the disruption in their circadian or sleep-wake rhythms.

Banks, an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, will present her study Wednesday at SLEEP 2007, the annual gathering of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

GP, CityCell provide relief for landslide victims

Grameenphone has extended its support to the ongoing government relief efforts to help the people affected in the recent landslides in Chittagong, says a press release.

Director of the New Business Division at Grameenphone Kafil HS Mueyed handed over 2500kg of rice, 1000kg of pulse and 500 liters of soybean oil to the relief coordination cell at the Chittagong Outer Stadium on Thursday.

The volunteers of 'Bondhu Shava' of the Porthom Alo provided support in this effort. At the event, Mueyed expressed GP's intention to extend further relief assistance, if necessary.

CityCell

CityCell has also extended its hand to help the victims of heavy rainfall and landslides in Chittagong, says a press release.

SM Sahabuddin Raj, general manager, Regional Operations, CityCell, handed over relief materials to the joint forces on Thursday to distribute them among the victims in Lalkhanbazar, Bakulia, Baluchora, Sakander Colony and Kushumbagh.

Relief materials were also distributed at Chokoria in Cox's Bazar. Under this programme, relief materials are also being distributed among the victims in Porshuram in Comilla, Fulgazi, and Sitakundo.



Chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Prof Mohammad Abdur Rab distributes relief materials among landslide victims in Chittagong recently.



Kafil HS Mueyed, director, New Business Division at Grameenphone, hands over relief materials to an official of the Relief Coordination Cell in Chittagong on Thursday.

Iran forcibly deports 1,00,000 Afghans

AP, Afghanistan-Iran Border

Dumped at this frontier outpost alongside hundreds of weary Afghan labourers, Khalil Jalil stepped out of Iran and back into Afghanistan only days after he said Iranian authorities beat him, threw him in the trunk of a car and locked him in a detention centre.

The 23-year-old's violent ejection is part of a broad Iranian crackdown on illegal Afghan migrants that has pushed more than 100,000 deportees across the border the past two months, leaving hundreds of Afghan families stranded without shelter and straining the impoverished country's resources.

Like Jalil, many of the deportees come with stories of abuse: Men beaten so badly that their legs and collarbones were broken, and legal refugees whose government-issued cards were cut into pieces by police.

Iran denies the allegations of abuse and says it has forced labourers back home because the 1.5 million undocumented Afghan migrants are an enormous burden on its economy.

As a result, about 2,000 Afghans a day are being sent out of Iran, where many sought better jobs or a stable home outside war-torn Afghanistan. Most are men, but entire families are being kicked out as well.

At the Islam Qala border crossing, about 75 miles west of the Afghan city of Herat, 1,200 people flow back into Afghanistan a day. Some carry suitcases, but several wear their work uniforms and are penniless, not having had a chance to collect their salaries or savings.



SM Sahabuddin Raj, general manager, Regional Operations, CityCell, hands over relief materials to the joint forces for landslide victims on Thursday.



PHOTO: STAR

People's Little Theatre takes out a colourful procession from Public Library in the city yesterday on the first day of the Jatiya Shishu Kishore Natya Utsab (Child drama festival).