

Dealing with mass hysteria

DR M KARIM KHAN

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The problem started in Adiabad Islamia High school and College, Raipura, Narsingdi. Few days ago, at around 11 am, few girls of that school felt seriously sick. They developed headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, restlessness and fainting.

It created much panic among others. However the affected students were taken to a local hospital, treated symptomatically and released later on.

Within few days, as many as eighty four students along with some school teachers were affected with the same problem. It was published in all news media of the country. Finally the symptom was diagnosed as *mass hysteria*.

Mass hysteria, also called collective hysteria or collective obsessional behavior is a sociopsychological phenomenon. In which a large group of people exhibit similar physical or emotional symptoms, characterised



by—

1.Spontaneous, en masse development of identical physical or emotional symptoms among a group of individuals, as in a classroom of school children.

2.A socially contagious frenzy of irrational behavior in a group of people as a reaction to an event.

The cause of mass hysteria is often a baseless belief that begins small but like a hurricane travels and becomes more devastating as it picks up speed.

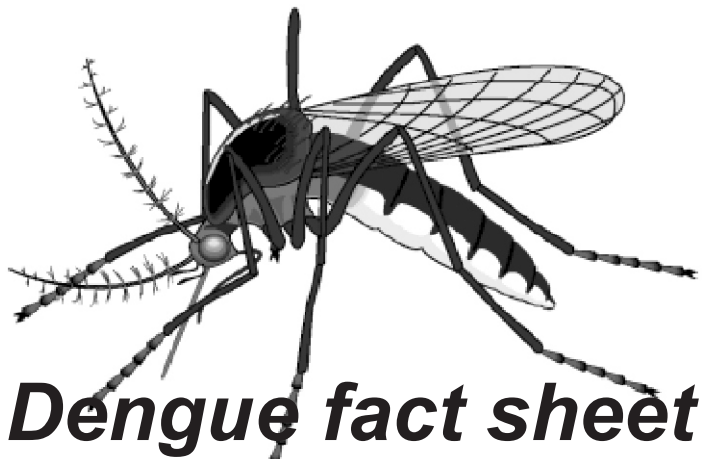
Affected persons produces headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, restlessness, hyper-ventilation, fainting. All physical and laboratory examination are found normal.

There is no specific treatment, but repeated reassurance is very important and effective. Thankfully mass hysteria occurs infrequently. Community awareness is needed to prevent the condition.

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Dengue fact sheet

STAR HEALTH DESK

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Dengue fever and dengue Haemorrhagic fever (DF/DHF) is a viral disease transmitted by female *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. There are four sero-types of dengue virus, DEN-1; DEN-2; DEN-3; and DEN-4; all producing similar manifestations, which may be asymptomatic, undifferentiated fever, dengue fever (DF) and dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) with plasma leakage and shock (called Dengue Shock Syndrome).

With the advent of rainy season there has been dengue outbreak in our country and cases were reported from the different metropolitan cities. No vaccine is available yet and there is no specific treatment. Hence DF/DHF control is primarily dependent on control of *Aedes aegypti* mosquito.

Symptoms

Symptoms of typical uncomplicated (classic) dengue usually start with fever within 4 to 7 days after you have been bitten by an infected mosquito and include high fever, up to 105°F, severe headache, retro-orbital (behind the eye) pain, severe joint and muscle pain, nausea and vomiting, rash.

The rash may appear over most of the body 3 to 4 days after the fever begins, and then subsides after 1 to 2 days. You may get a second rash a few days later.

Symptoms of dengue hemorrhagic fever include all of the symptoms of classic dengue in addition to marked damage to blood and lymph vessels, bleeding from the nose, gums, or under the skin, causing purplish bruises.

Symptoms of dengue shock syndrome — the most severe form of dengue disease — include all of the symptoms of classic dengue and dengue hemorrhagic fever, plus fluids leaking outside of blood vessels, massive bleeding, shock (very low blood pressure).

Treatment

- Complete bed rest is essential and patient should take sufficient fluid drinks (fruit juice, ORS etc.). This will help correction of dehydration due to fluid loss from vomiting and high fever.
- Should consult the physician immediately for appropriate management of the illness and must be referred to the hospital if needed.
- We should not use Aspirin or NSAID-these drugs may trigger gastritis and provoke bleeding.
- Giving antibiotic is useless.
- In any case appropriate consultation and referral to hospital may be needed

Prevention

- Avoid mosquito bites, use long sleeve shirts and protective clothing
- Sleep under mosquito nets even during day as dengue mosquitoes bite during day.
- Discard objects in which water collects, e.g. tins, cans, coconut shells, etc. Do not allow water to collect in pits around your houses. All stored water containers should be covered all the time. This will prevent breeding of Dengue mosquitoes, and
- The patient should be kept under a mosquito net or in a screened room during the period of illness
- Destroy all domestic and peri-domestic breeding sources of *Aedes aegypti* mosquito (artificial containers, coconut shells, canes, used tires, earthen pots, flower vase, ant-traps etc.)
- Use of mats, coils, aerosol house spray, vapourising mosquito repellents etc. may be useful
- Use of Repellent: Essential oils from plant extracts (neem oil, lemon grass, citronella oil etc.) give protection from mosquito bites.

HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention update-1

4th International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention was held from July 22-25 in Sydney, Australia. The conference featured reports on the latest developments in the areas of basic, clinical and prevention science related to HIV/AIDS.

The conference received a record number of abstracts. The three-day IAS conference, attended by 5,000 delegates from more than 130 countries, urged governments to allocate 10 percent of HIV funding to research, both medical and operational, to ensure treatment reached those in the world's poorest nations.

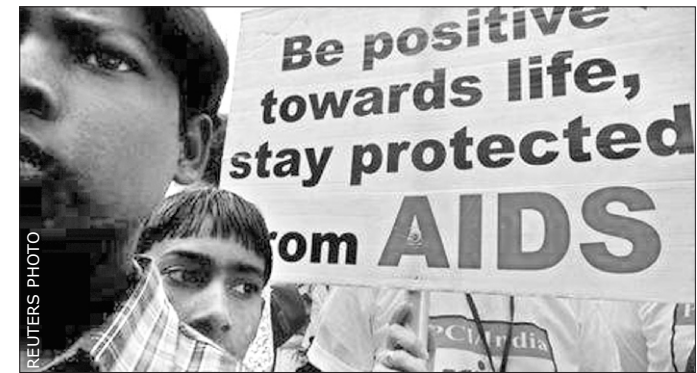
Dr Tareq Salahuddin, In-charge of Star Health page attended the conference in Sydney. He will report on different issues, research papers and latest update on HIV pathogenesis, treatment and prevention discussed in the conference.

IAS conference calls for child-specific HIV drugs

The world's biggest AIDS conference closed on Wednesday with a call for the development of child-specific drugs to ensure millions of HIV-infected children not only survive to adulthood, but also live without damaging side effects from their treatment.

"We must do more to protect our future, finding better ways to treat the youngest among us," said International AIDS Society (IAS) President Dr Pedro Cahn.

An estimated 2.3 million children are HIV infected, with around 600,000 new infections each year. Without treatment half



of all babies infected will die before their second birthday.

Yet only 15 percent of children who need treatment are currently receiving anti-retroviral drugs, the IAS conference in Sydney was told.

The goal of treatment in children must be balanced between halting the effects of the HIV disease and the long-term effects of antiretroviral on a developing child.

The conference was told that early treatment of children increased survival rates, but Sohn said some children who have been on early treatment

Early treatment saves more HIV babies

HIV-infected babies have a greater chance of survival if they receive treatment before they show signs of illness or a weakened immune system, the International AIDS Society (IAS) was told on Tuesday.

A study of infants in Cape Town and Soweto in South Africa, which began in 2005, found that 96 percent of infants given immediate drug treatment were still alive two years later, compared with only 84 percent of children given later treatment.

The study, by the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID), was so successful that it was cut short by four years so that all children could receive treatment.

An estimated 2.3 million children are currently HIV infected, with around 600,000 new HIV infections in children each year. Without treatment half of all babies infected with HIV die before their second birthday.

"Children with HIV infection frequently show rapid disease progression within the first year of life due to their developing immune systems and susceptibility to other serious infections," said Dr Elias Zerhouni, director of the US National Institute of Health, in releasing the study at the 4th IAS conference in Sydney this July.

"This is the first randomised clinical trial that shows that infants treated before 3 months of age will do better than infants who have their treatment delayed," Zerhouni said in a statement.

The study of 337 babies aged 6 to 12 weeks was initially aimed at examining whether early antiretroviral drug therapy over a limited period would delay HIV progression.

Doctors had hoped that early treatment would allow a child's immune system to develop and possibly allow the child to stop treatment for a period of time and avoid continuous therapy.

Caring for HIV-infected children is complicated by the fact that their immune systems are not fully developed in the first year of life, which makes them especially susceptible to rapid the disease progression and death.

The current standard of HIV care in many parts of the world is to treat infants with antiretroviral therapy, but only after they show signs of illness or a weakened immune system.

Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said children were the "silent victims" of the global AIDS epidemic, with 9 out of 10 child sufferers infected through mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding.

MSF said "vertical transmission" of HIV from mother to child had been almost been wiped out in wealthy countries because antiretroviral drug therapy was given to pregnant mothers and babies within a few hours of birth.

The mother-to-child transmission rate in wealthy nations was below 1 percent, compared with rates as high as 25 to 45 percent in poorer nations in Africa, said MSF.

Did You Know



Smoking marijuana ups risk of schizophrenia

Using marijuana increases the risk of one day developing a psychotic illness such as schizophrenia, according to a study that provides some of the strongest evidence yet linking the drug to a mental disorder.

Marijuana is one the most commonly used illegal substances in many countries.

Many consider it on par with alcohol or tobacco but the results shows marijuana poses a danger many smokers underestimate, said Stanley Zammit, a psychiatrist at Cardiff University and the University of Bristol, who worked on the study.

The researchers found that marijuana users had a 41 percent increased chance of developing psychosis marked by symptoms of hallucinations or delusions later in life than those who never used the drug. The risk rose with heavier consumption.

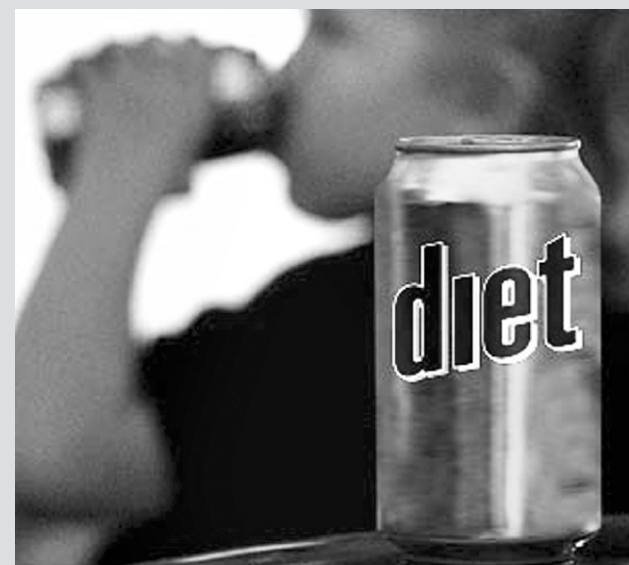
Other findings have highlighted the link between marijuana use and the risk of schizophrenia-like symptoms such as paranoia, hearing voices and seeing things that are not there.

But this study marks one of the most comprehensive, thorough and reliable reviews of its kind and should serve as a warning, two Danish researchers wrote in an accompanying comment in the Lancet medical journal, which published the study.

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Source: The Lancet



No safe haven: Diet sodas linked with health risks

Sodas — even diet ones — may be linked with increased risk factors for heart disease and diabetes, US researchers said.

They found adults who drink one or more sodas a day had about a 50 percent higher risk of metabolic syndrome — a cluster of risk factors such as excessive fat around the waist, low levels of "good" cholesterol, high blood pressure and other symptoms.

"When you have metabolic syndrome, your risk of developing heart disease or stroke doubles. You also have a risk of developing diabetes," said Dr Ramachandran Vasan of Boston University School of Medicine, whose work appears in the journal *Circulation*.

Prior studies have linked consumption of sugar-laden sodas with multiple risk factors for heart disease, but Vasan and colleagues also found the link extends to diet sodas.

The study included about 6,000 middle-aged men and women who were observed over four years.

Those who drank one or more soft drinks a day had a 31 percent greater risk of becoming obese.

They had a 30 percent increased risk of developing increased waist circumference — which has been shown to predict heart disease risk better than weight alone.

They also had a 25 percent increased risk of developing high blood triglycerides as well as high blood sugar, and a 32 percent higher risk of having low high-density lipoprotein or "good" cholesterol levels.

The researchers then analysed a smaller sample of participants on whom data on regular and diet soft drink consumption was available. Those who drank one or more diet or regular sodas per day had a 50 to 60 percent increased risk for developing metabolic syndrome.

Intriguing new angle

"The part about diet soda is more intriguing," Vasan said.

He said people who drink soda, whether diet or sugar-sweetened, tend to have similar dietary patterns.

"On average, soda drinkers tend to eat more calories, consume more saturated fat and trans fat, eat less fiber, exercise less and be more sedentary," Vasan said.

The researchers adjusted for those factors and still observed a significant link between soft drink consumption and the risk of developing metabolic syndrome.

Vasan said there are several theories about how diet sodas could increase a person's metabolic risk.

"One possibility is that diet soda is sweet. Maybe drinking something sweet conditions you in such a way that you develop a preference for sweet things," he said.

"Also, diet soda is a liquid. When you take liquids at a meal, they don't satiate you as much (as solids)," he said.

The caramel coloring of some sodas also may play a role. He said caramel coloring in animal experiments was associated with tissue inflammation. "These are all theories which we have not studied," Vasan said.

He said while the study showed an association between soda consumption and having a higher risk of metabolic syndrome, it does not prove soda was the cause.

"Before people change their habits, we would like to see these data replicated in other studies, he said.

"We'd also like nutrition scientists to conduct additional research to help us understand why diet soda is associated with metabolic risk."

The American Heart Association said, people should understand that the study did not demonstrate that diet sodas cause heart disease and said it can be better to have a diet drink than a full-calorie soda.

"The American Heart Association supports dietary patterns that include low-calorie beverages like water, diet soft drinks, and fat-free or low-fat milk as better choices than full calorie soft drinks," the group said.

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Source: Circulation

The new ADA recommendation to prevent the epidemic of diabetes

To prevent the epidemic of diabetes, combined treatment recommendation is necessary. Recently, American Diabetes Association (ADA) and European Association of Study of Diabetes (EASD), the two leading association of this sector, for the first time, have given a combined protocol to treat and to control diabetes, says a press release.

According to WHO, 120 million diabetic patients reside in Asia. The same report suggests that there will be nearly 180 million diabetic patients in the region by 2025.

According to this new treatment protocol, named "2006 Consensus", physicians can reduce the blood sugar level of type-2 diabetes patients by most effective way. In addition to lifestyle intervention and oral drug Metformin, they strongly advocate the use of basal insulin as first line insulin. This algorithm represents, for the first time, the world's leading diabetes societies' published joint guidelines for the treatment of diabetes.

As a part of regular roll out programme, leading organisation,



American Diabetes Association, and Sanofi-Aventis jointly organised a scientific conference and workshop session in the Asia Pacific Region with this new recommended treatment protocol.

In This remarkable educational initiative, taken by the ADA Faculty, named, "Standing Together Against Diabetes", held in Thailand, about more than 500 leading physicians from this region attended the programme and created a great milestone by sharing their research information.

NUTRITION TIPS

Curry ingredient may fight Alzheimer's

REUTERS, Washington

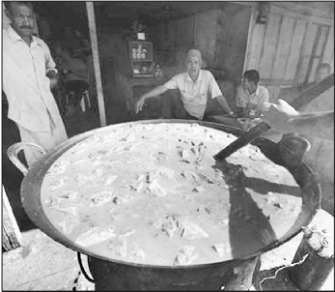
An ingredient in curry may help stimulate immune system cells that gobble up the brain-clogging proteins that mark Alzheimer's disease, US researchers said.

They said they isolated a compound in turmeric, a yellow spice that gives curry powder its distinctive color, that appears to stimulate a specific response against Alzheimer's symptoms.

It may be possible to infuse this compound into patients and treat the incurable and fatal brain condition, Dr Milan Fiala of the University of California Los Angeles and colleagues said.

Other research has shown that curcumin, an antioxidant found in turmeric, can help prevent tumors from forming in the laboratory and in rats.

Writing in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Fiala's team said they had shown earlier that curcumin may affect the brain cells of Alzheimer's patients. But they wanted to pinpoint the precise factor in



curcumin, which is a complex compound.

They isolated bisdemethoxycurcumin and determined it was the most active ingredient in curcumin.

Using blood samples from Alzheimer's patients, they found that bisdemethoxycurcumin boosted immune cells called macrophages to clear a protein called amyloid beta, which clogs the brains of Alzheimer's patients and kills brain cells.

Macrophages are the immune cells that literally engulf and destroy deformed cells and attack invaders, like bacteria or viruses.

The researchers said it is not

clear if people can eat enough curcumin to get this level of activity, but said bisdemethoxycurcumin was active at a level that could easily be achieved by infusion.

Some studies have suggested that people who eat a lot of curry may be less prone to cancer and Alzheimer's, but whether curry is responsible is unclear.

Companies are working to make an Alzheimer's vaccine that would stimulate the production of antibodies against amyloid beta. This approach would stimulate a different type of immune response and might be less likely to cause harmful side effects, like brain inflammation, the researchers said.

"Our results may provide an entirely different direction to therapeutic opportunities in Alzheimer's disease through the repair of the functional and transcriptional deficits of Alzheimer's disease macrophages by curcuminoids," the researchers wrote.