

WORLD VOICE DAY 2008

Keep your voice healthy

World Voice Day, marked on April 16, is an international celebration of the voice, the primary means of communication. The goal of World Voice Day is to raise awareness about the importance of voice, its disorders, methods of voice preservation and enhancement. The message, "Don't Tax Your Voice" prompts us to consider ways to preserve and protect our voices. This is the first time we are observing World Voice Day in Bangladesh.

Understand how your voice works & why it is important

We generate a voice from the vibration of two vocal cords in the larynx situated in the throat. The airstreams powered by our lungs pass between the vocal cords and sets them vibrating. The rate of vibration can range from 100 to 1,000 times per second during speech and singing.

Even for the average person, that can add up to more than one million times a day that the vocal cords collide. Now consider how much we depend on our voice at home, at work, and out and about. Even though we may take it for granted, keeping our voice healthy and fit is crucial.

Things to do to protect and improve your voice

• Drink plenty of water - 8 to 10 glasses per day. Water is the best way to stay hydrated and keep your vocal cords lubricated. Hydrated vocal cords allow an easier, more sustained, and more effortless voice.

• Warm up your voice before heavy voice use. You wouldn't start a long run or workout without a brief stretch. The same applies to the voice. Warming up your voice will improve your

vocal quality, projection, and endurance.

• Use plenty of breath support when you speak; airflow from your lungs powers your voice. Good breath support during both speaking and singing will give you more vocal strength, improved quality, and less fatigue.

• Use a microphone. When giving a speech or presentation, consider using a microphone to lessen the strain on your voice.

• Schedule periods of the day with no talking to allow your voice to rest. Brief "voice naps" throughout the day lessen vocal fatigue and overuse and can help keep you in good voice.

• Listen to your voice. When it is complaining, know that you need to modify and decrease your voice cords to recover. Pushing your voice when it is already

hoarse can lead to significant problems. If you experience frequent or long periods of hoarseness, you should be evaluated by an otolaryngologist.

Avoid doing things that can injure your voice

• Don't smoke. In addition to being a potent risk factor for laryngeal cancer, smoking causes inflammatory changes in the larynx that have a negative effect upon voice quality, pitch, and endurance.

• Don't be a screamer or shouter. These kinds of vocal behavior put excessive wear and tear on the vocal folds and can lead to injury. Think about non-verbal ways to communicate across a distance or to a crowd, such as using a whistle, waving or clapping, or flipping a light switch. Wave the flag of your

favorite team rather than shouting at a ball game.

• Avoid eating habits that can promote acid reflux, such as going to bed with a full stomach or consuming caffeinated beverages. Elevating the head of your bed and not wearing tight-fitting clothes can also help prevent reflux, which can damage the vocal cords.

Be aware of everyday opportunities for vocal strain

• Don't talk over background noise without considering how it affects your voice. In these situations it is important to note how your throat feels, not only how it sounds. You may not hear how loudly you are talking, but you will feel the strain and irritation in your throat as a warning that you should reduce your vocal intensity or risk injury.

Think about how much you use your cell phone. Remember when riding in a car or train was a time for vocal rest? Remember when lunch was spent with a book or magazine rather than on the phone? Use of cellular phones is convenient, but they represent major opportunities for voice overuse or abuse. Think about whether you really need to make that extra call, particularly on a bad connection or in a place with background noise. If you avoid those calls, you will be banking some vocal currency, not just saving on your cellular bill.

Ref: American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery

The write-up was compiled by Prof Dr M Alamgir Chowdhury, an International Fellow, American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery and Professor & Head, Department of ENT, Medical College for Women & Hospital, Uttara, Dhaka.

War against doctors' dress!

DR RUBAUL MURSHED

A revolution is going to take place in the hospital's dress code very soon. This will start from the United Kingdom. Following the recent well publicised outbreaks of MRSA and Clostridium difficile, various demands and claims have been made about how doctors' dress might be regulated with a view to improving hospital infection rates.

Hospital Management authorities in England are banning doctors' traditional long sleeved white coats (popularly known as Apron in our country) from coming September. They are also going to ban ties, long sleeves and jewelry for doctors in an effort to minimise the spread of deadly hospital-borne infections.

Throughout the world Hospital management classically advocates doctors to look professional. A lot of experts have been saying strongly against wearing a tie for the last few years, as those pieces of clothes are usually not laundered everyday, worn for many days colonising pathogens.

In 2006, British Medical Association termed this as "functionless clothing item". As concern over hospital-borne infections has intensified, doctors are taking a serious look at their clothing. In fact, manner of dress is often used by patients and families as a cue for recognition of the function of the staff members and may shape their perceptions about individuals and the hospitals. As well as, patients and patient care providers need to be safe from exposure to infections.

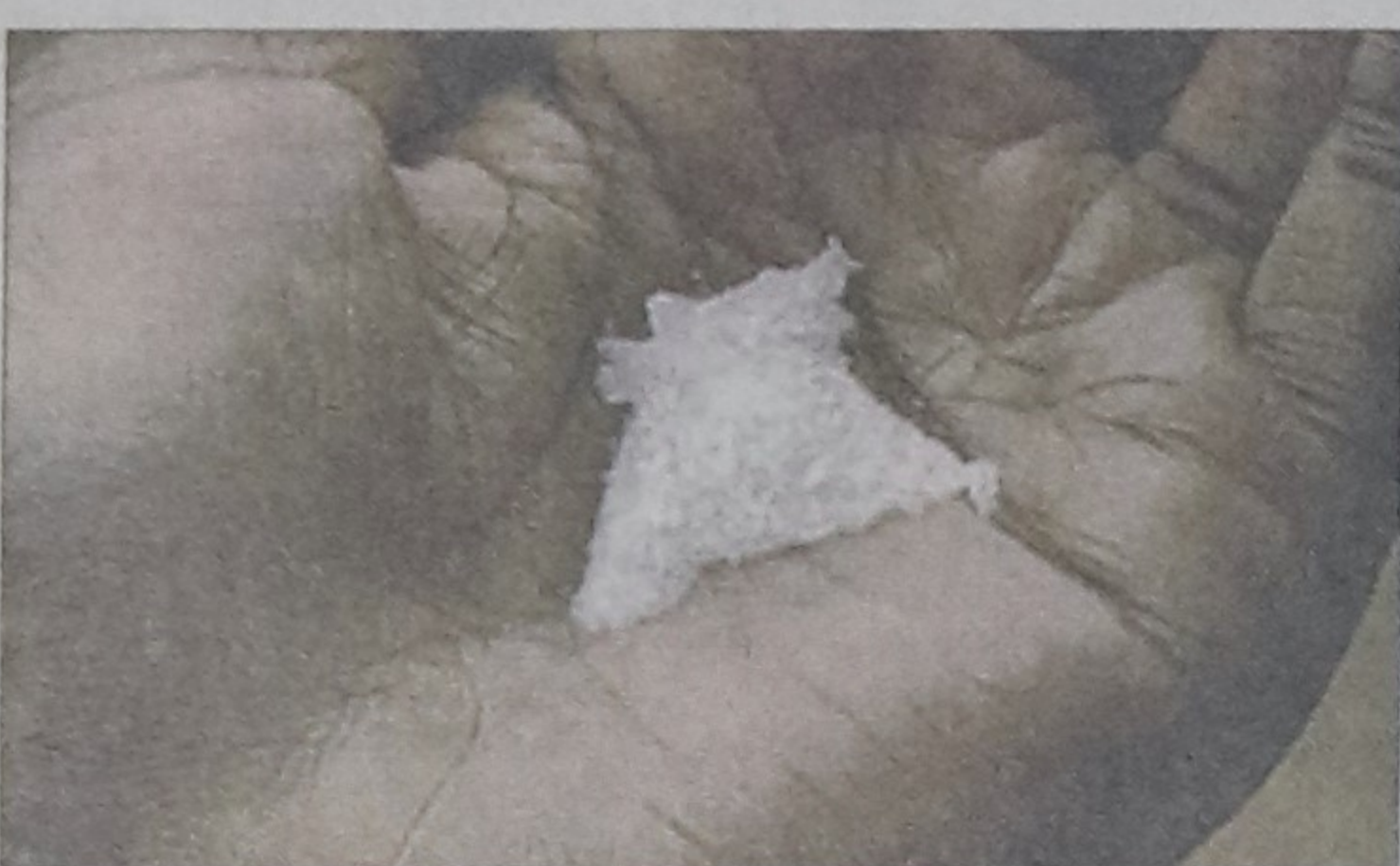
It has been found that MRSA (Popularly known as a superbug) accounts for more than 50 percent of in-hospital blood infections especially in most Asian countries. Moreover, MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) - the noxious bacteria are resistant to lots of antibiotics.

The concerned authority believes that the new dress code would help prevent the spread of MRSA. Since this bacteria are so difficult to eradicate, health care providers are becoming more interested in improvements of hospital cleanliness.

On the contrary, the U.S. Infection Control Societies did not recommend similar dress restrictions because there is no strong evidence that healthcare staffs who don't wear ties lessen the risk of infection. Dr. James Steinberg, an Emory University infectious disease specialist believes that doctors and nurses who don't adequately wash their hands pose a far bigger risk to patients and that hand-washing should be the focus of infection control efforts in all hospitals.

For management point of view, why is dress code so important for a hospital? Because of two reasons - (i) to convey a professional appearance to the patients, visitors and co-workers; and (ii) to promote safety for patients and healthcare staffs.

In fact, hospital staffs represent the hospital and influence the opinion of patients, visitors and other employees. Today in Bangladesh hospitals, we need a guideline for healthcare professionals regarding proper dress code, which will be very much helpful especially in treating high-risk patients.



Micronutrients, education keys to end hunger: study

REUTERS, Oslo

Governments could take a big step towards ending world hunger by spending just \$1.2 billion a year in developing nations on dietary supplements and education about the food needs of babies, a study showed.

Such targeted spending to help a billion of the poorest people in Africa and Asia could save millions of lives and bring annual economic benefits of more than \$15 billion in lower health bills and longer and more productive lives, it said.

"Hunger and malnutrition are responsible for millions of deaths. But there are relatively inexpensive ways to help address the problem," said Susan Horton, of Wilfrid Laurier University in Canada who was one of three authors of the report.

The study, issued before annual World Health Day on April 7, is one of a series commissioned by The Copenhagen Consensus, a project by Danish statistician Bjorn Lomborg about the costs of solutions to world problems ranging from AIDS to terrorism.

The total cost of adding micronutrients such as iron to flour to

curb anemia, of providing vitamin A capsules to help children's eyesight and immune systems and of adding iodine to salt to avert thyroid damage was estimated at \$347 million.

The study, written by Horton with specialists from the World Bank and Mexico's National Institute of Public Health, estimated such micronutrient measures would mean annual benefits of \$5 billion from improved health.

And it said that education about nutrition, largely to promote breast-feeding of babies, would cost about \$798 million and bring annual benefits of \$10 billion.

Projects to give medicines to kill off worms and other intestinal parasites among pre-school children would cost about \$27 million a year and bring benefits of \$159 million.

"The long-term solution to hunger has to be poverty reduction and improving food availability," Horton said.

Halving by 2015 the proportion of people on the planet who suffer from hunger - now almost a billion people - is among the Millennium Development Goals set by the world in 2000.

Maternal exercise benefits mother and infant

REUTERS HEALTH, New York

Exercise during pregnancy has cardiovascular benefits not just for the mother but for the developing fetus as well, according to research presented at the 121st annual meeting of the American Physiological Society, part of the Experimental Biology 2008 scientific conference.

The results of this pilot study "imply an exciting potential benefit of maternal exercise on fetal cardiac autonomic nervous system regulation," Dr. Linda E. May from Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences in Kansas City, Missouri expressed.

The autonomic nervous system controls the body's involuntary activities, such as the beating of the heart, blood pressure, breathing rate, and functions in the internal organs.

May and colleagues tested the hypothesis that fetuses exposed to exercise in the womb have better autonomic function compared with that of fetuses not exposed to exercise.

The researchers measured the fetal heart rate and heart rate variability between 28 to 36 weeks of pregnancy in women who exercised and those who did



not - 5 women performed moderate intensity aerobic exercise for at least 30 minutes, 3 times per week, while the other 5 did not partake in a regular exercise regime.

May said that fetuses exposed to maternal exercise had significantly lower heart rates than fetuses not exposed to exercise. At each stage of pregnancy, the differences between the average fetal heart rates of the two groups were statistically significant, she noted.

At 32 weeks of pregnancy, the fetal heart rate variability was also significantly higher in the exercise group than in the non-exercise group. This relationship was weaker but still evident at 36 weeks of pregnancy.

"When the mom exercises during pregnancy, the unborn baby gets the same type of training effect that you would see in an adult - so you see the lower heart rate and also improved heart rate variability, which is evidence of improvements in the nervous system of the heart."

"Maternal exercise may be the earliest intervention to improve the heart of children and possibly the best," May concluded.

Study ties bedroom TV to unhealthy habits in teens

REUTERS, Washington

Teenagers with a bedroom television tend to have poorer diet and exercise habits and lower grades in school than those without one, U.S. researchers said.

While many studies have examined TV viewing habits of young people, researchers at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health said little had been known about the consequences in particular for older adolescents of having a bedroom TV.

They questioned 781 adolescents, ages 15 to 18, in the Minneapolis area in 2003 and 2004. Of them, 62 percent reported having a television in their bedroom.

Not surprisingly, those with a bedroom TV were more apt to watch it a lot, clocking four to five more hours in front of a television per week, the researchers said. Twice as many of the teens with a bedroom TV were classified as heavy TV watchers -- at least five hours a day -- compared to those without one.

Girls with a bedroom television reported getting less vigorous exercise -- 1.8 hours per week compared to 2.5 hours for girls without a TV. They also ate fewer

vegetables, drank more sweetened beverages and ate meals with their family less often, the researchers said.

Boys with a bedroom TV reported having a lower grade point average than boys without

Anderson, one of the researchers.

"When you upgrade your TV in the living room and you have this smaller TV that's out of date but still usable, parents should really resist putting it in one of your



one, as well as eating less fruit and having fewer family meals, the researchers said.

"It really clearly points out that there's some merit to not allowing your child to have a TV in the bedroom," said Daheia Barr-

children's bedrooms -- and resist the pressure from the child to have a TV in their bedroom," she said in a telephone interview.

Surprise on obesity
The American Academy of Pediatrics urges parents to remove TV

sets from children's bedrooms, the researchers noted. The findings were published in the academy's journal Pediatrics.

Boys were more likely to have a television in their bedroom than girls -- 68 percent versus 58 percent.

Teens from the highest income families were far less likely than those from all other income levels to have a bedroom TV, the survey found.

The researchers tracked body mass index -- a measure based on height and weight -- and found that having a bedroom TV had no influence on whether teens were obese.

Barr-Anderson said that finding was a surprise, considering that previous studies looking at younger children -- one on elementary school kids and one on low-income preschoolers -- found that having a bedroom TV was an even stronger predictor of obesity than the time spent watching TV.

Both boys and girls with a bedroom TV reported spending less time reading and doing homework, although the researchers said the differences were not statistically significant.



New generation drug eluting stent launched

Recently a new generation drug eluting stent -- Nobori™ stent system of Terumo Corporation of Japan has been launched in the market of Bangladesh.

A stent is a small, lattice-shaped, metal tube that is inserted permanently into an artery. The stent helps hold open an artery so that blood can flow through it.

Drug-eluting stents are stents that contain drugs that potentially reduce the chance the arteries will become blocked again. Stents are widely used in interventional cardio- and cerebro-vascular diseases.

Nobori™ stent system has a bioabsorbable polymer offering

best in class clinical results and strong patient safety profile. Nobori™ stent system utilizes biolimus A9™, an analogue of Sirolimus, which is expected to reduce tissue proliferation. The stent delivery system applies Terumo's proprietary hydrophilic coating which enhances deliverability and reduces arterial wall damage.

These were told at the launching ceremony at a local in the city, while National Prof Brig (Rtd) M A Malik was present as the Chairperson of the ceremony.

Unimed Limited, Bangladesh will make the Nobori™ stent system available in the local market of Bangladesh.

HOSPITAL FACILITY

Radial coronary angiography introduced at Apollo Hospitals

The Cardiology department of Apollo Hospitals, Dhaka has introduced the Radial Coronary Angiography at their hospital, says a press release. It is considered convenient and easy route to reach the heart.

This technique through radial artery (a blood vessel in wrist) is likely to escape certain problems of conventional method for coronary angiogram, which is done via femoral artery (a blood vessel in groin).

With less complication, quick

recovery it has become very popular route for coronary angiogram. It also allows angioplasty via the same route with less complication.

After few hours of this procedure patients can walk and move freely and go back to their work. The patient compliance is much better here.

It is already functioning in full swing and the hospital authority expects more patients to receive this option for coronary angiogram.

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