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According to Professor Mollah, parents often take the pneumonia-afflicted child at the last stage to the hospitals where the doctors have little to do to save the child. "Many a times, at the beginning of illness, parents collect medicine from the nearby medicine stores without any prescription of the registered doctor. This indiscriminate use of antibiotics can make the germs resistant to the commonly used effective antibiotics. And this is one of the important cause of treatment failure for pneumonia cases." says Professor Mollah.

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He emphasised the need for popularising breastfeeding further among mothers from all walks of life. The children who are not breastfed are four times more susceptible to infection than the breastfed children, he pointed out and added that breastfeeding could be one of the best means to prevent child mortality even pneumonia.

"If the child gets exclusive breastfeeding up to the age of six months and appropriate complementary foods afterwards along with breastfeeding up to the age of 2 years, he or she is almost safe from pneumonia and as well as other infections", continues Professor Mollah, "There are some other risk factors such as indoor air pollution and inappropriate immunisation that accelerate the risk of pneumonia."

The government is already aware of the problem and has taken measures to reduce the deaths from pneumonia. In January 2009, the government initiated a pilot project on immunisation against Haemophilus Influenza type b and has just been introduced in Khulna division. "The vaccine is being incorporated in the National EPI programme and is now expanding gradually all over the country which will definitely reduce the rate of pneumonia from *Haemophilus Influenza type b*. But, pneumonia caused by another major germ *Streptococcus pneumoniae* will remain a threat, since such immunisation is not available in Bangladesh. The western countries have made such immunisation; however, it is not very effective in our country as the germ serotypes are different from those in western countries.

Therefore, it is our hope and aspiration that the government will extend it's collaboration with the International agencies to make effective immunisation against *Streptococcus pneumoniae* of Bangladeshi children." says Professor Mollah.

It is obvious that a combined effort by pediatricians, parents and policymakers to combat this killer disease that kills so many children under five years old, is of utmost importance. ■