

Triple assessment is crucial to confirm breast cancer

DR TASMIA TAHMID

Breast cancer can be sudden and dreadful nightmare for any woman's life. Many of Bangladeshi women are diagnosed with breast cancer at an advanced stage. However — proper assessment with physical examination, imaging and tissue examination called biopsy — the triple assessment leads to early diagnosis, easier management and more successful treatment for breast cancer.

Every year, October is observed as the breast cancer awareness month with a view to creating awareness regarding symptoms, risk and screening procedure. Noticing a change in your breasts, reaching a landmark age and having a baby are all situations that may prompt you to think about breast health. If you notice a breast lump, do not get scared. Most lumps in the breast are actually non-cancerous. You need to consult with a physician to evaluate the lump.

Triple assessment comprises clinical examination, imaging investigations and biopsy evaluation, will enable a confident



diagnosis in 95 percent of patients with suspected breast cancer.

Clinical examination is an essential first step in the diagnosis of the problem. This procedure can help the doctor in establishing whether s/he thinks something is innocent or suspicious.

Imaging consists of a mammogram, ultrasound or MRI. Biopsy — a sample of your breast tissue is removed and sent to a laboratory for testing to determine whether the cells are cancerous (malignant) or non-cancerous (benign). There are several different biopsy procedures including fine needle aspiration, core biopsy, vacuum assisted core biopsy and open biopsy. Your doctor will explain which procedure is most suitable for you.

The results of the triple assessment can help the doctor concerned decide whether you need any further treatment or breast surgery.

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PALLIATIVE CARE

Easing life at the end

DR RUMANA DOWLA

The word "Palliative Care" may be new to many of us but the care existed in various labels for centuries within our society. Palliative care is defined as an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness. It helps prevent and relief of sufferings by early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual.

Palliative care can help people with a variety of illnesses like cancer, dementia, HIV/AIDS, neurological disorders, end stage cardiac failure, kidney failure and other life-limiting illnesses.

In most countries including Bangladesh, cancer is the main area of intervention for palliative medicine. In Bangladesh, new cancer cases per year can be estimated as 200,000. Out of these, 150 thousand die in each year. National Institute of Cancer Research and other hospitals can provide treatment to only 2 percent of all cancer patients per year.

Relief of sufferings of these cancer patients and improving patient's quality of life is a primary objective in the effort against cancer. When cancer is not curable, important quality of life advantages still can be achieved through optimal (often palliative) anticancer treatment e.g. chemotherapy, radiotherapy and supportive care, including pain symptom and fatigue management and end of life palliation.

Patients should not suffer needlessly from cancer pain. Most pain from cancer can be adequately controlled with analgesics given by mouth. It is estimated that about 85 percent of patients could be free of significant pain with the techniques we have available today. Most cancer patients with terminal disease need expert pain management; between 60-80 percent of such patients have significant pain. Multi-centre studies indicate that about 40 percent of outpatients with cancer pain do not receive analgesics potent enough to manage their pain.

Almost 80 percent of all cancer patients in our country still present at late stage when palliative care is the only way for the patient and family; also often inadequate treatment due to financial and social issues brings them from curative to incurable stage. To solve this problem, we need to work with our policy makers to create awareness and develop guidelines to address non-communicable disease burden like cancer.

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Obesity may be in your gene

STAR HEALTH DESK

It is not only about the diet and lifestyle that make you obese. There is another factor that lies in your part of DNA called gene may influence the shape of your body. A UK study in Nature Genetics has recently revealed that genes which may play a role in regulating body shape. The effect of genes may be stronger for women than for men says, the researchers.

Scientists have found more than 30 new gene variations linked to obesity and fat in research they say could help explain why some people get so overweight, and why some are apple shaped and some shaped like pears.

Previous studies have found that where we store fat in our bodies can affect our health. More fat around the waist — being apple-shaped — is linked with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease, while having a fat bum and thighs — being pear-shaped — has been suggested in some research to offer some protection against diabetes and high blood pressure.

The recent discovery of genes that have an important role in influencing whether we are apple-shaped or pear-shaped, and the ways in which that differs between men and women will open new insights to more targeted approaches to obesity prevention and potentially to the development of new drugs.

Although tackling obesity through changes in lifestyle or by different treatment options may be challenging after this discovery, experts opined that most of the cases obesity is caused by unhealthy diet and lifestyle.

GLOBAL HANDWASHING DAY

Handwashing: Your health in your hands

DR SHAHJADA SELIM

The practice of handwashing is very simple. But the lack of practicing this simple behaviour costs millions of children's lives. Washing hands with soap and water, especially at crucial times could prevent the death of 3.5 million children every year dying of diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections.

With a view to raising awareness on handwashing with soap as a key approach to disease prevention, the 3rd Global Handwashing

Day was observed yesterday. This year, the theme of Global Handwashing Day — more than just a day — aims to make the simple, life-saving practice of washing hands a regular habit for the life long. Studies found that washing hands with soap and water — after using the toilet, handling anything that can transmit germs and before handling food — helps reducing the incidence of diarrhoeal disease by more than 40 percent.

According to a study conducted by UNICEF and WHO, Bangladesh is among the 10 countries in the world

that report the largest number of child deaths due to diarrhoea. Approximately 50,800 children under the age of five years die every year in Bangladesh from diarrhoeal diseases.

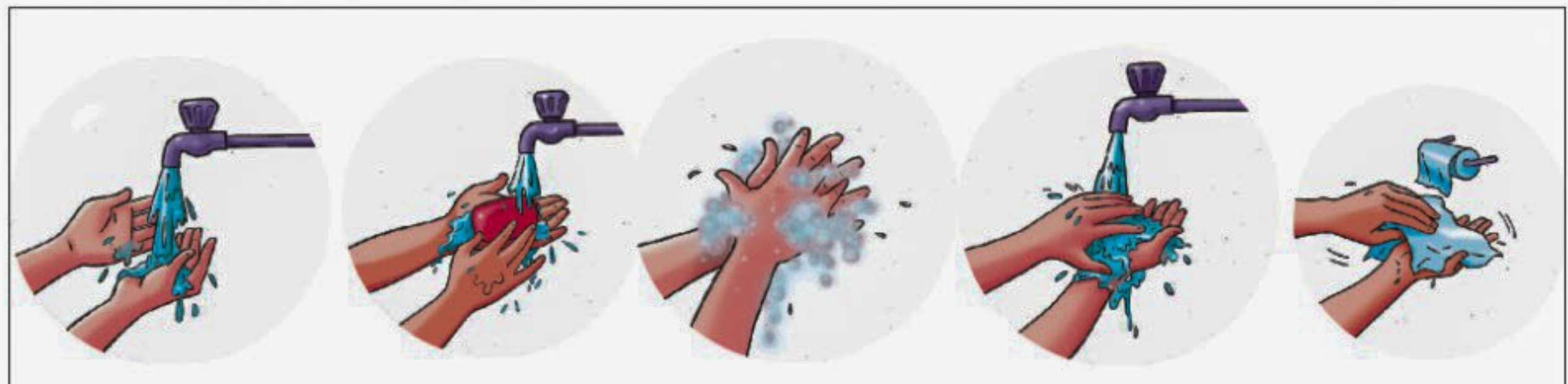
Research shows that washing hands with soap is a highly cost-effective health practice that can reduce the incidence of diarrhoeal disease by over 40 per cent; yet, despite its life-saving potential, handwashing with soap is seldom practiced.

The children who participate in the Global Handwashing Day pledge cam-

paign will play the role of "change agent" in their respective families and communities.

Last year, there was a total record breaking 52,970 children washed their hands with soap throughout the Bangladesh. This year, the similar initiative will take place on the 20th of October, after school resumes from a five-day Puja holiday. Let's put our hands up and reinforce the initiative to create mass awareness.

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SAFETY ASSISTANCE FOR EMERGENCIES (SAFE)

Handwashing with proper method is the easiest and cost-effective way to save lives. Make a practice of handwashing with the ideal method depicted in the photo above. It is a five-step-method to ward off germs and make hands clean. The steps are (1) Wet your hands under running water (2) Apply soap (3) Rub hands together until the soap is bubbly (4) Rinse your hands under running water (5) Dry hands with a clean towel or tissue

Risk factors for breast cancer

- Risk of breast cancer increase with the age. 1 in 52 affected at the age of 49.
- Having family history of breast cancer.
- Not having children or having your first child later in life
- Being overweight (especially in the waist), with excess caloric and fat intake, increases your risk
- Long-term use of Hormone Replacement Therapy with combined estrogen and progesterone increases the risk of breast cancer.
- Beginning your period at a younger age before age 12
- Beginning menopause at an older age after age 55
- The gene mutations are referred to as BRCA1 and BRCA2 can greatly increase your risk of breast cancer.
- Radiation exposure to your chest as a child or young adult
- If you have had breast cancer in one breast, you have an increased risk of developing cancer in the other.

Knowing for better living

In Bangladesh...

50,800 children die every year due to diarrhea !

Take plenty of liquid foods

Take ORS during diarrhea

Wash your hands properly before meal

Drink water after boiling properly

Consult your Doctor in case of emergency



Courtesy...

