

Squint is treatable, delay hampers vision

DR MD RAJIB HOSSAIN

Squint, which is also known as cross eye is a sign of fortune — the popular myth still prevails in many parts of Bangladesh and people take it for granted. Many people have the misconception that squint is not cured by medical treatment or if so, it might be expensive. These fallacies hold back people from seeking medical treatment that lead to vision impairment (sometimes even blindness), social insult, refusal of marriage proposal and so on. Ultimately, keeping the squint eye wrapped with fake fortune brings misfortune for the entire family.

Squint — a condition in which eyes are not looking into the same direction — may be present since birth or develop within the first six months of life (called congenital squint). Although the cause is not always known, sometimes it runs in families and in certain

cases, it develops in course of childhood due to disorders of the eye like long-sightedness, weakness of the eye muscles, brain or nerves diseases like cerebral palsy, brain injury or tumor.

Congenital squint needs to be treated within two years of birth to get the best functional vision outcome. Another potential complication of squint is Amblyopia, also called lazy eye where the vision is poor due to lack of use of the eye. If Amblyopia is not treated before the age of about seven years, the visual impairment usually remains permanent.

Dr Khair Ahmed Choudhury, a WHO Fellow of Paediatric Ophthalmology and Squint and an Assistant Professor at the Department of Ophthalmology of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College said that treatment of squint varies from simple eye glasses to safe surgery depending on the type. In most of the cases, it can be treated with simple glasses, occlusion therapy and

exercise. Surgery is usually performed for cosmetic purpose and may help to restore binocular vision in some cases. He urged parents taking their child with squint to an ophthalmologist at early stage to protect vision and increase self esteem.

The number of skilled ophthalmologists to treat squint is extremely low in Bangladesh. National Institute of Ophthalmology (NIO), Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital at government level, Islamia Eye Hospital and Chittagong Eye Infirmary and Training Complex at private level are the few super-specialised centres to deal with squint at very low cost. Child Sight Foundation (CSF), a non-profit organisation is also providing the surgery to the poor children at free of cost at its hospital named Wahida Matin Memorial Child Vision Centre in Dhaka.

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HAVE A NICE DAY

Don't let snoring damage your marriage

Snoring can be a serious problem that may eventually lead to separate bedrooms and sometimes to separation with partners. It can create serious problems not only in a marriage, but also in one's health. Snoring is not just affecting the quality sleep; poor sleep can lead to daytime fatigue, irritability and increased health problems too.

Well, there are new developments around the snoring world. The cause of all snoring is not the same — everyone snores for different reasons. When we get to the bottom of why we snore, then we can find the right solutions to a better sleep.

Some scientists found that 75 percent of people who snore have obstructive sleep apnea (when breathing is disrupted during sleep for short periods), which increases the risk of developing heart disease. Here are some tips to help you get soundless sleep:

Change your sleep position — Lying on back makes the tongue collapse to the back wall of your throat, causing a vibrating sound during sleep. Sleeping on your side may help prevent this. A full-length pillow that supports your entire body provides an easy fix.

Recline the bed with the head up and extended — The position helps open up nasal airway passages and may help prevent snoring. Although this is not good for neck pain, but if snoring continues regardless of the sleep position, obstructive sleep apnea may be a cause, which is dangerous.

Loose extra pounds — When someone gained weight and started snoring and did not snore before that, weight loss may help. Fat around neck squeezes the internal diameter of the throat, making it more likely to collapse during sleeps that ultimately causes snoring.

Drink plenty of fluids — Secretions in one's nose and soft palate become stickier when s/he is dehydrated. This may create more snoring.

Remove allergens in bedroom — You need to clean up the overhead ceiling fan's dust and replace your dirty pillows time to time to get rid of the condition.



Dr Rubaiul Murshed

HEALTH bulletin

Ecuadorean villagers lend clues to longevity

REUTERS, Chicago

A small group of Ecuadoreans with a genetic mutation that causes dwarfism may hold clues to preventing cancer and diabetes, researchers found recently.

A 22-year study of people in a remote village in Ecuador who have genetically low levels of growth hormone reveals startlingly few cases of both diseases, the international team reported in the journal Science Translational Medicine. And drugs that are already approved to block growth hormone may help prevent these diseases, they said.

Alcohol kills more than AIDS, TB or violence: WHO



REUTERS, Geneva

Alcohol causes nearly 4 percent of deaths worldwide, more than AIDS, tuberculosis or violence, WHO warned recently. Approximately 2.5 million people die each year from alcohol related causes, the WHO said in its "Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health."

Alcohol is a causal factor in 60 types of diseases and injuries, according to WHO's first report on alcohol since 2004. Its consumption has been linked to cirrhosis of the liver, epilepsy, poisonings, road traffic accidents, violence, and several types of cancer, including cancers of the colorectum, breast, larynx and liver.

Reducing the re-emergence of notorious Nipah virus

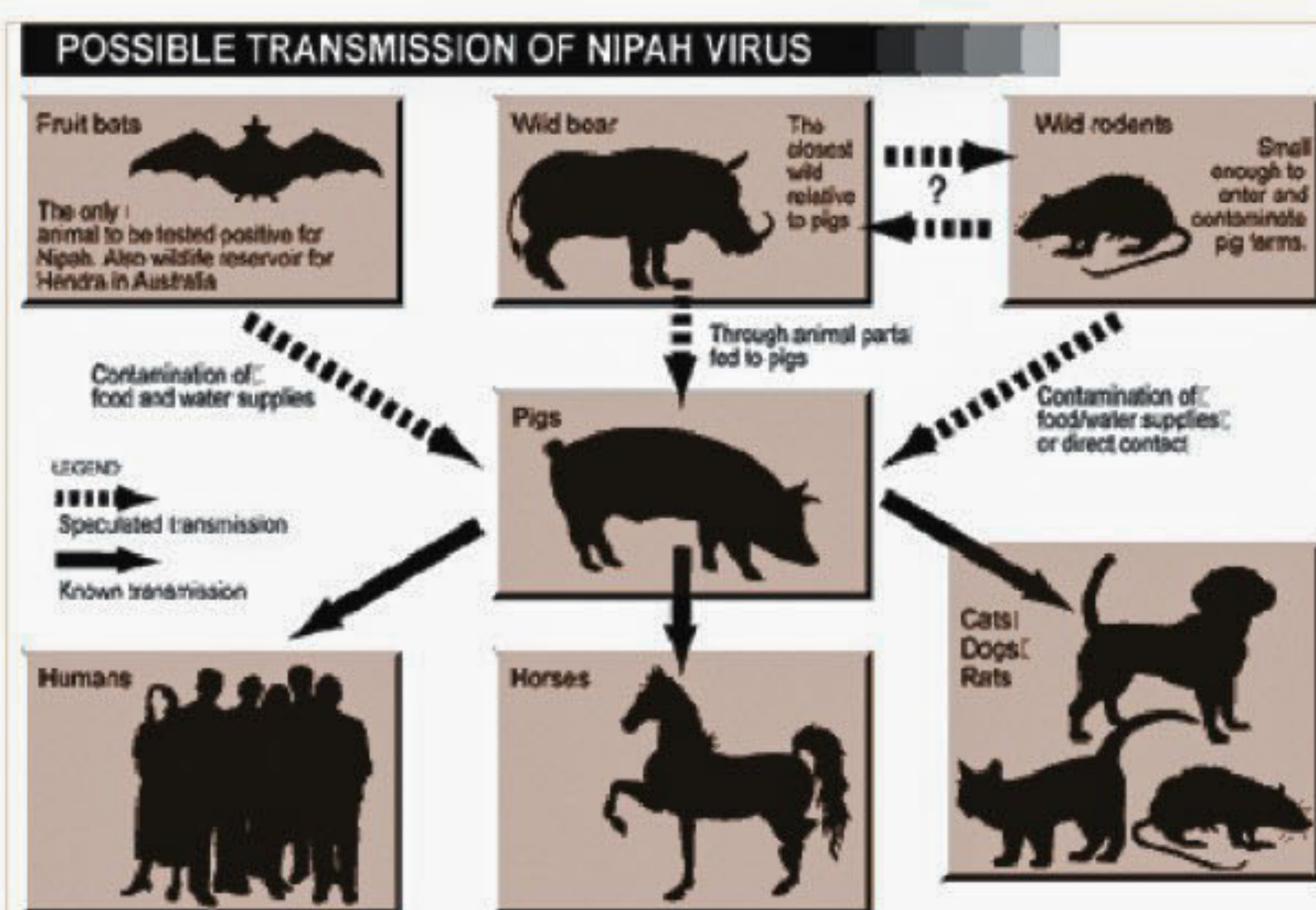
DR PRONAB CHOUDHURY

Since its first detection in Bangladesh in 2001, Nipah virus has been a cause for concern. Several human outbreaks of the virus in the region have been reported that caused significant number of mortality. As there is no specific drugs and vaccine against this virus, raising awareness of the risk factors is the only way to reduce infection.

Experts from Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) informed that Nipah virus is contagious that can be transmitted from humans from animals or directly from human to human. They recommended that people should avoid close physical contact of virus infected persons.

Healthcare personnel are urged to wear gloves when taking care of ill patients and regular hand washing after caring of sick patients.

To avoid animal contacts, people should deal with sick animals or slaughtering process using proper protecting cloths. Bats and pigs are the vector for animal to human



transmission. Therefore, they should be avoided.

In order to avoid the risk, experts urged farmers to avoid drinking date juice, eating half eaten fruits and should wash fruits thoroughly before eating. This virus can be inactivated by soaps, detergents and many other disinfectants.

The symptoms are influenza like — fever, headache and muscle pain. In patients who develop encephalitis (inflammation of brain tissue), the symptoms may

include drowsiness, convulsions or even coma. Rarely, patients develop respiratory signs which may include atypical pneumonia, breathlessness, bleeding from the gastrointestinal tract and other complications can occur in severely ill patients.

If anyone has the above symptoms and positive contact history, s/he should consult a physician.

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Ray of hope for end-stage liver diseases

STAR HEALTH REPORT

"Bangladesh will soon be able to provide the state of art medical facility to treat end stage liver diseases" — hoped a number of experts during a conference held recently at a local hotel in the city.

Renowned physicians from

home and abroad congregated in the discussion organised by Bangladesh Gastroenterology Society.

Experts shared their views and talked about the recent advances in the treatment of liver diseases. Prof Mohammed Rela, an Indian doctor working in the UK who performed a record level of more

than 1300 liver transplant surgeries has shared his experience with Star Health.

Prof Rela who is currently providing technical support to Global Hospitals Group, India expressed his interest to give training and logistic support to the government hospitals of Bangladesh.



With a view to improving maternal and child nutrition, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) organised a discussion uniting representatives of government ministries, international organisations, NGOs, academia and business involved in the fight against malnutrition, says a press release. GAIN called on Bangladeshi leaders to put nutrition higher on their agenda. The picture above taken from the session symbolises the commitment to strengthen partnership to give momentum to the movement of ensuring nutrition for all.

Knowing for better living

Due to Osteoporosis

30-50% women
&

15-30% men are at risk of bone fractures !

Eat calcium rich food regularly

Sunbathe for at least 10-15 minutes daily

Take balanced diet regularly

Exercise regularly

Consult your Doctor if necessary



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