

# 36 out of 1000 babies stillborn in Bangladesh

The second highest rate of stillbirth (the death of a baby before birth at or above 28 weeks of pregnancy) in Asia occurred in Bangladesh in 2009. Most of these deaths could be prevented through interventions. Urgent action

DR MD RAJIB HOSSAIN

When a pregnancy progresses towards the end (last trimester), the excitement, anticipation, joy related to upcoming baby become intense. The outstanding journey of pregnancy through pain and pleasure comes to a shattering and heartbreaking end when the baby dies in the womb in last few weeks. The mother bears the brunt of the consequences and suddenly faces scorn, isolation and rejection. Soon after delivering a dead baby, many women are being pressured to become pregnant again that ultimately put them at increased risk; sometimes spell repeated stillbirth. This is the cycle that continues in the life of thousands of women in Bangladesh.

When a baby dies at or after 28 weeks of pregnancy inside

the mother's womb is called a stillbirth, according to World Health Organisation (WHO). Recently published data in the medical journal The Lancet shows that about 1,28,550 stillbirths occurred in Bangladesh in 2009 alone and the rate was alarming! 36 out of every 1000 babies were stillborns which was the 3rd highest rate in the world and 2nd in Asia after Pakistan. But the issue is not properly recognised, not only in Bangladesh but also in the global health agenda.

Although addressing stillbirth could help achieve target of Millennium Development Goals (MDG-4 and 5) of reducing child and maternal mortality, it has not yet been included in the goals and targets. Due to stillbirths, more than 7,200 parents everyday take their newborn baby home in a coffin and 98 percent of them occur in low-

**Due to stillbirths, more than 7,200 parents everyday take their newborn baby home in a coffin and 98 percent of them occur in low- and middle-income countries like**



and middle-income countries like Bangladesh. Although this estimation shows reduction of stillbirths from 3 million in 1995 to 2.6 million in 2009, this is even slower than reductions for both maternal and child mortality in the same period.

Interventions to reduce stillbirth is not separated from those to achieve MDG. The five main causes of stillbirth are childbirth complications, maternal infections in pregnancy, maternal disorders (especially, hypertension and diabetes), fetal growth restriction and congenital abnormalities. So taking measures to prevent stillbirth will help both way.

Almost half of all stillbirths, 1.2 million, happen when the woman is in labour. These deaths are directly related to the lack of skilled care at this critical time for mothers and babies.

Experts pointed out key inter-

ventions that could avert 1.1 million stillbirths. These are- Comprehensive emergency obstetric care, Syphilis detection and treatment, Detection and management of fetal growth restriction, Detection and management of hypertension during pregnancy, Identification and induction for mothers with >41 weeks gestation, Malaria prevention, including bednets and drugs, Folic acid fortification before conception, Detection and management of diabetes in pregnancy.

Stillbirth claims more lives each year than HIV-AIDS and malaria combined. Unfortunately, it is under reported and often goes unrecorded. It is the high time to strengthen and modify policy to address stillbirths with proper interventions.

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## DRIVING SAFETY



## 7 tips for safety of older drivers

Driving can sometimes be challenging for older adults. Follow these safety tips for older drivers, from taking good care of yourself to planning ahead and updating your skills.

Driver safety requires more than understanding road signs and traffic laws. As you get older, you will likely notice physical changes that can make certain actions — such as turning your head to look for oncoming traffic or driving at night — more challenging.

Still, older drivers can remain safe on the road. Consider seven tips for older drivers.

- 1: Stay physically active
- 2: Schedule regular vision and hearing tests
- 3: Manage any chronic conditions
- 4: Understand your limitations
- 5: Drive under optimal conditions
- 6: Plan ahead
- 7: Update your driving skills

Source: [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

## HEALTH bulletin

### Rotating shift work may affect menstrual cycle

REUTERS HEALTH, New York

Women who work rotating shifts may be somewhat more likely to experience shifting menstrual cycles according to a new study that raises the possibility of work schedules affecting fertility.

Irregular, for the purposes of the study, meant that the time between a woman's periods usually varied by more than a week. Menstrual irregularities make it harder for a woman to become pregnant.

Women who work nights are advised to pay close attention to their diet and exercise habits — both of which can be challenging for people on irregular work schedules.

### Suicides rise and fall with economy



Suicides in the United States ebb and flow with the economy, rising in bad times and falling in good, researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said recently.

## Integrated treatment for spinal disc prolapse

DR N M KIRON

Many patients with back pain, leg pain or weakness of the lower extremity muscles are diagnosed with a herniated disc or prolapsed disc.

Spinal disc is a cushion that sits between the spinal vertebrae is pushed outside from its normal position when it is prolapsed. When the herniated disc ruptures and pushes out, the nerves may become pinched.

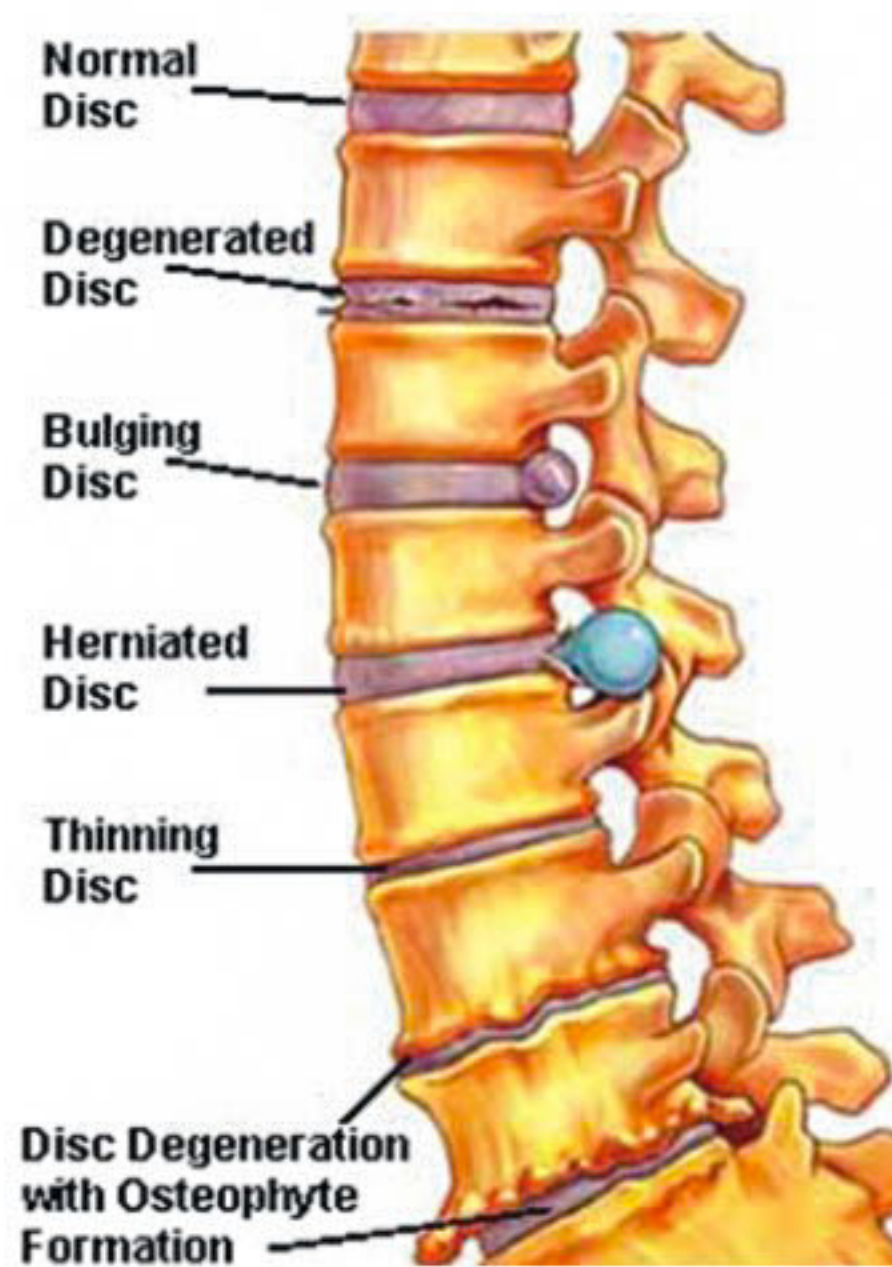
Patients with prolapsed disc are treated with various approaches like Physiotherapy, oral medicine, injections and surgery. Most of the times, they need combination of approaches to get rid of the pain. After application of painkiller medicines, patients feel pain free at some extent but it is revived again when medicine and physiotherapy are stopped. Patients then search for something more to get permanent relief.

Treatment under integrated system can be a better solution for such patients. These include Electro-physiotherapy, Acupuncture and Medicine with or without surgery. It is observed that combined use of electro-physiotherapy i.e. microwave diathermy, ultra sound diathermy, digital automatic

traction etc, electro acupuncture, and medicines, such as, muscle relaxant, vitamin B1, B6 and B12, vitamin E are highly fruitful in that cases.

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### Examples of Disc Problems



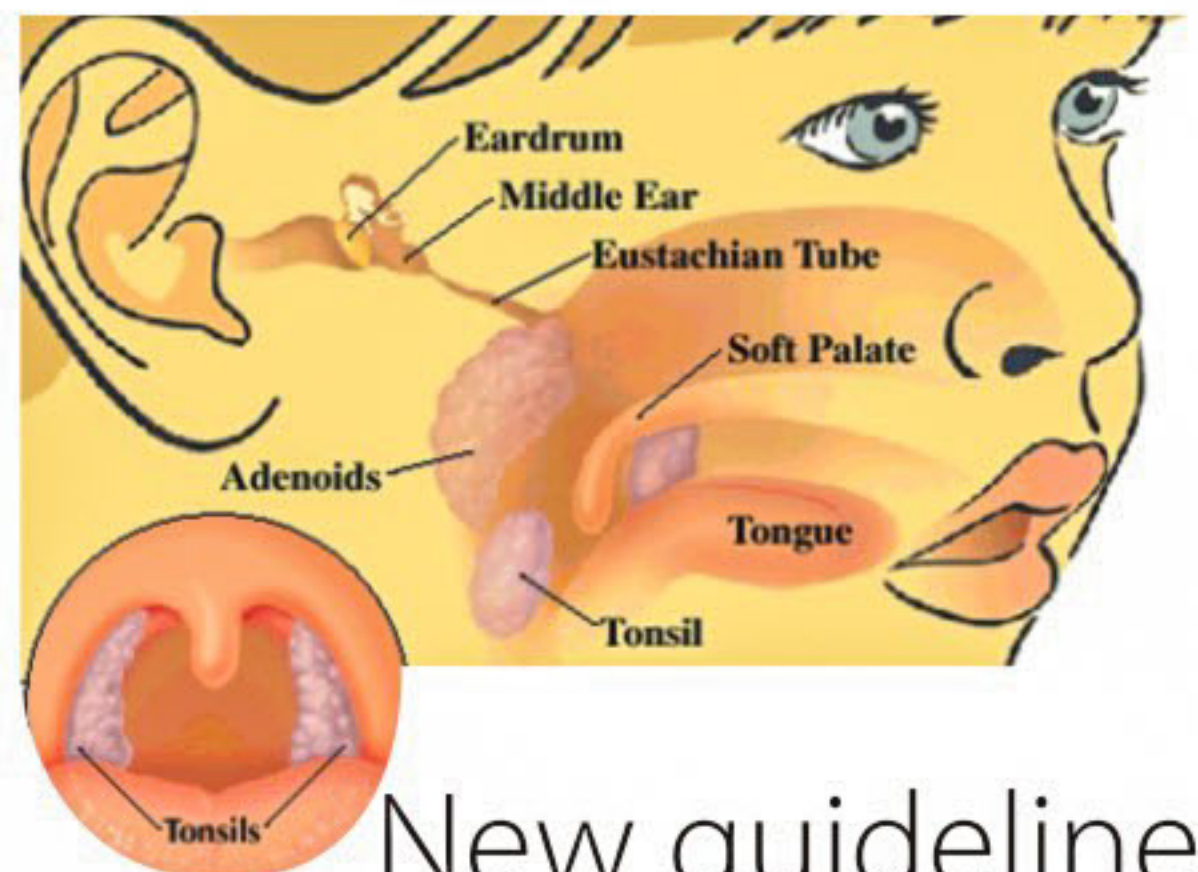
## Arthritis can be treated by injectable gel

A new gel which can be injected directly into a joint can provide pain relief for arthritis sufferers. Scientists used a gel called 'GRAS' that self-packages a liquid drug into gel globules. This gel has the potential to release pain medication in response to the enzymes when flare-ups occur.

The traditional treatment for arthritis involves taking large doses of oral medications to ensure that enough of it reaches the affected part of the body. Injectable drugs for joint pain have also been around for quite some time but these offer only short-term relief.

This new way of treating arthritis was developed by scientists at the Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH).

Source: Medindia



## New guideline for tonsil operation

New guidelines from the American Academy of Otolaryngology issued in last January suggested tonsillectomy for recurrent sore throats only if frequent or severe. At the same time, the academy now recommends that the operation be considered for children who have trouble breathing while they sleep.

The new guidelines reflect changes in clinical practice and attempt to bring scientific evidence to bear on an operation at times popular to the point of ubiquity. So the tonsillectomy, once routine, now requires a nuanced diagnosis. It may improve quality of life for some children, but there are limits to what it can accomplish — with sleep issues and behavior problems, and with recurrent infections.

Operating tonsil or tonsillectomy started long before in 1921, with a mission to prevent sore throats and streptococcal infections and all their serious consequences in an era without antibiotics. After then, it becomes a very familiar operation.

Source: New York Times

## Knowing for better living

In Bangladesh...

**45 men & 22 women out of 1,000 people** are suffering from chronic respiratory disease

Keep away from dust & smoke

Avoid smoking

Use mask during cleaning your home

Maintain a hygienic life

Consult your Doctor



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