

# 2% children in Bangladesh live with severe disability

Many forms of disability can be prevented with timely action and many need support, new study reveals

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Although there is cost effective intervention and treatment available, many children in Bangladesh are becoming unnecessarily disabled. Many more children are living with severe form of disability whereas simple aid or support could reduce the severity and help them leading a normal life. Timely action can prevent many forms of disabilities, bring back children's life from a state of handicapped to normal like other children.

A disability prevalence survey conducted by Handicap International (HI) and National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD) in 2005 found 5.6 percent of the population living with disability in Bangladesh. But there was no survey particularly on children with disabilities. Child Sight Foundation (CSF) has been conducting a study since 2008 on childhood disability in Bangladesh. The study reveals that about 2 percent children are



living with severe form of disabilities in Bangladesh. There is extreme lack of support to these children and most of them are excluded from mainstream education.

Some other forms of disability like blindness due to cataract,

hearing impairment, cleft lip and palate, club foot, epilepsy can be cured with cost-effective medicine and surgery. Certain forms of disabilities need urgent action, immediate support in order to prevent, reduce severity and for the long term benefit for them.

The study was conducted in three districts of Bangladesh — Sirajgonj, Natore and Bogra with the technical support from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The research was lead by Dr M A Muhit, Consultant, Childhood blindness

and disability, University of London and Honorary Executive Director of CSF.

Dr Muhit said that in most form of severe disabilities, simple aid like hearing aid, white cane, wheelchair, physiotherapy can help improve their situation to a normal life.

The study includes cleft palate and cleft lip, visual impairment, hearing loss, epilepsy, hydrocephalous, club foot, cerebral palsy and different form of physical disability etc.

The research is a part of a project where 4331 children with various form of disabilities are identified so far by key informant method under the project.

Extrapolating the findings of study, it can be visualised that about a million of children living with severe disability are in need of urgent attention and assistance. We should step up efforts to enable access to mainstream services including health, education and help live like a normal child.

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## IMMUNISATION



COURTESY: WHO

## New Decade of Vaccines launched

Vaccines are undoubtedly one of the best investments in health. Immunisation programmes have contributed enormously to reducing the burden of infectious diseases, and are responsible for much of the falling rates of morbidity and mortality worldwide.

In December 2010, global health leaders committed to making the next 10 years the Decade of Vaccines — to ensure discovery, development, and delivery of lifesaving vaccines globally, especially to the poorest countries.

This Series looks at every aspect of this medical technology, including the developments expected over the coming decade and what we can expect from translation of the latest vaccine science. Improving vaccine coverage and financing of both existing and newer vaccines together with how we communicate the benefits of vaccines and ensure public trust and confidence, are also examined.

## HEALTH bulletin

### Exercise may protect the brain from 'silent strokes'

Jogging, swimming, biking or other moderate to intense physical activity may protect the brain from silent strokes or small brain lesions that can lead to mental decline and increase the chances of a future stroke, a new study from Columbia University suggests. Researchers revealed that moderate to intense physical activity cuts seniors' risk by 40 percent.

### Urine test could hold key to early cancer diagnosis



Cancers of the gut, stomach and pancreas could be detected much sooner with a simple urine test, new research from Edinburgh University suggests.

Researchers have identified key proteins in the urine of patients with advanced cancers. The findings could help in diagnosis much earlier, leading to improved survival rates.

## Meningitis can be cured by just 5 days treatment

In children beyond the neonatal age-group with purulent meningitis who are stable by day 5 of Ceftriaxone treatment, the antibiotic can be safely discontinued

### STAR HEALTH REPORT

Bacterial meningitis is an important cause of morbidity and mortality in developing countries like Bangladesh, but the duration of treatment was not well established.

A group of researchers aimed to compare the efficacy of 5 and 10 days of parenteral Ceftriaxone for the treatment of bacterial meningitis in children and found a very good outcome in favour of 5 days.

The study finding was published recently in medical journal The Lancet.

They did a multicountry, double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomised equivalence study of 5 versus 10 days of treatment with Ceftriaxone in children aged 2 months to 12 years with purulent meningitis caused by different types of bacteria.

The study was done in ten paediatric referral hospitals in Bangla-



desh, Egypt, Malawi, Pakistan, and Vietnam.

The primary outcomes were bacteriological failure or relapse. The study included 1004 children randomly assigned to study groups in the analyses.

The study interprets that in children beyond the neonatal age-group with purulent meningitis who are stable by day 5 of Ceftriaxone

treatment, the antibiotic can be safely discontinued.

Prof Samir Saha, Executive Director of Child Health Research Foundation and Head, Department of Microbiology, Dhaka Shishu Hospital, Bangladesh, who is one of the investigators of the study said, "It is really a revolutionary work and needs to be translated to policy decisions."

## Omega-3 fatty acids may help heart patients with stents

Combining omega-3 fatty acids found in fish, sea food, plants, and nut oils with blood-thinning drugs may reduce the risk of heart attacks in patients who have had stents placed in their coronary arteries, a new European study suggests.



Source: American Heart Association



The first anniversary of successful living donor liver transplant was celebrated recently at BIRDEM Hospital, Dhaka. Kazi Ershad Ahmed, 42, is the first recipient who got the liver transplanted locally is seen in the photo greeted with flowers.

## Knowing for better living

### In Bangladesh . . .

8 million people suffer from allergy!

Keep your home dust free

Avoid allergic chemical cleaners

Keep your pets outdoor if possible

Keep pollen outside

Take a bath or shower before bedtime

Consult your Doctor



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