

# More blood, more life

World Blood Donor Day encouraged more people to become regular voluntary blood donors

DR MURAD SULTAN

Treating the patient with blood and thus saving valuable lives when all other means of treatment becomes standstill is a miraculous achievement in the history of medicine. This art of treatment gives a sense of doing something for humanity. Millions of people owe their lives to people whom they never met — the heroes who donated blood voluntarily and without any reward.

The spirit of World Blood Donor Day is to praise those heroes, show the honour and respect for saving millions of lives which could not have been saved otherwise. The day was observed on June 14. The objective of the day is to create awareness among new blood donors about the importance of voluntary blood donation and encourage more people to become regular donors.

There is inadequate supply to replace blood lost during childbirth (a major cause of maternal deaths) and to treat anaemia that threatens the lives of mother and children.



Blood and blood products are needed everywhere for routine and emergency surgery including life-saving treatment of growing numbers of people injured in road traffic accidents and for treating congenital haemolytic anaemias like Thalassaemia.

Voluntary non-remunerated blood donors are the foundation of safe blood supply, because they are associated with significantly lower levels of infections that can be transmitted by transfusion, including HIV and hepatitis viruses.

Screening for transfusion-transmissible infections is essential, but safer donations come from the safer donor.

Reference laboratory in Dhaka Medical College Hospital under Safe Blood Transfusion Programme reveals that the country requires roughly 6 lac units of blood yearly and currently only around 31 percent of total collection comes from voluntary blood donor and rest from family or replacement blood donors.

The current blood collection system of our country is based on relatively risky platform in

terms of availability, accessibility of blood. Hospital based blood centres with exception of very few drives for blood collection from voluntary blood donors through mobile blood camp.

On the other hand, there are various organisations working on blood collection through voluntary blood donation fails to meet requirement of the country. A fresh look into the situation needs to be given before it gets worse. We need to identify the gaps, laps and mystifying factors that are most vital to know why the country yet to

reach voluntary blood donation by 100 percent.

As per World Health Organisation (WHO) global blood safety initiative — it is the state's responsibility to ensure safe blood in adequate for the citizen of the country.

There is strong need to have situation analysis to identify factors why people are not attracted or motivated to donate blood only under altruistic attitude rather directed, the potential and professional organisation which can support in motivation in recruitment of voluntary blood donor and ways for resource allocation to do these.

Special focus should be given for development of vertical programmes. Generally 1 percent of total population is necessary to meet a nation's basic requirements for blood. There is hope that a new generation of blood donors will come forward, provide the safest possible blood for use wherever and whenever it is needed to save lives.

**The writer is an Expert on blood safety and currently working at WHO, Bangladesh.**  
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## MARIJUANA ADDICTION

Is your child using Marijuana?

DR SAT PARKASH

Marijuana use has some common signs among most of its users. If your child is high on Marijuana, they might seem dizzy and have trouble walking; seem silly and giggly for no reason; have very red, bloodshot eyes; and have a hard time remembering things that just happened. When the early effects fade, over a few hours, the user can become very sleepy.

Parents should be aware of changes in their child's behaviour, although this may be difficult with teenagers. Parents should look for withdrawal, depression, fatigue, carelessness with grooming, hostility, and deteriorating relationships with family members and friends. Besides, changes in academic performance, increased absenteeism, lost interest in sports or other favorite activities, and changes in eating or sleeping habits could be related to drug use. However, these signs may also indicate problems other than use of drugs.

In addition, parents should be aware of signs of drugs and drug paraphernalia, including pipes and rolling papers; odor on clothes and in the bedroom; use of incense and other deodorisers; use of eye drops; clothing, posters, jewelry, etc. promoting drug use.



### Facts about marijuana addiction

Marijuana, also called Ganja in Bangla is a type of hemp plant. Marijuana is often rolled in paper, so it looks similar to a cigarette and smoked. When anyone smokes, it releases harmful chemicals into your lungs. Many people do not know that marijuana smoke contains more tar and more than 400 chemicals with some cancer-causing than tobacco smoke.

• Some people addicted to marijuana have a hard time quitting and have to find treatment. Some people who use a lot of marijuana every day and then quit suddenly may have sleeping problems, anxious, irritation or nervousness without the drug. Or they may have an upset stomach or lose their appetite. These symptoms rarely last more than a few days.

• To get the maximum effect, people who smoke marijuana often inhale more deeply and hold the smoke in their lungs longer than tobacco smokers do. This increases the risk of cancer.

• Smoking marijuana irritates your lungs and has been linked to chronic cough and bronchitis. It may also make asthma worse.

• In people at high risk of developing schizophrenia, Marijuana may bring on symptoms earlier.

• Using of marijuana for a long time may make it harder to pay attention, remember things and learn.

• If you smoke Marijuana, the effects last for several hours. But the main active ingredient is stored in your fat cells and can stay in your body for days or weeks!

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## How to clean baby's ear safely

PROF M KARIM KHAN

New parents always want to take best possible care of their babies. Sometimes they cannot deliver the best care simply because they do not have experience. Very often, parents ask physician about cleaning of baby's ear. Is it really necessary to clean the ear? How to clean them safely or how often we should do that? These are frequently asked questions asked by new parents.

Outer part of the ear can be cleaned while giving bath to the baby. It is to be done by soft, clean cotton cloth. But do not use any cotton bud or finger tips. Wax inside ear is protective and natural and rarely needed to clean it. But if there is excess accumulation of wax which impairing hearing or if there is pain, itching, tinnitus, you may need to clean them. Sometimes few drops of olive oil are put inside ear to make the wax soft, it is also now a days not recommended.

Soft clean cotton cloth to be rolled to make a wick and only that can be inserted inside ear to clean the inner aspect of the ear. Please



do not insert any cotton bud inside ear, if you use cotton bud that will push dirt deep inside and moreover you may injure the membrane of ear or introduce infection. Doctors may use medicine to soften the hard wax but do not use these by yourself. Consulting a pediatrician will dictate you what to do and what not to do. Take care of your sweet baby.

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## Proper medical waste management to prevent HIV

DR SULTANA YASMEEN ROSY

My first impression of Sobuj was made by his helpless look, a severely ill 18-year old boy, weighing just over 20 kg. He was scared but willing to get treated. For the last two years he had been suffering from recurrent respiratory tract infections, oral infections, low grade fever with productive cough, stomachache, running nose and severe diarrhoea. He was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS that was transmitted through contaminated needle.

IDUs (injection drug users) like Sobuj are one of the main routes of HIV transmission in Bangladesh. The latest round of the serological surveillance (sixth round) conducted between October 2004 through 2005, recorded 4.9 per cent of injection drug users to be HIV positive in Dhaka.

Many hospitals cannot maintain proper sterilisation and they do not dispose of hospital wastes properly, which increases the chance of the spread of infectious diseases like HIV. Dental and surgical precautions can also limit the spread of HIV infection by proper sterilisation of surgical instruments.

**The writer is a physician working in Dhaka Medical College Hospital.**

## Knowing for better living

### In Bangladesh . . .

... 26.3% people are suffering from musculoskeletal pain

Avoid heavy physical activity

Use firm mattress while sleeping

Keep your back straight while sitting

Avoid standing at same position for a long time

Avoid smoking

Consult your doctor



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