

DENGUE FEVER

Time to be watchful, not worried

STAR HEALTH REPORT

The recent rise in the number of dengue fever cases creates panic throughout Bangladesh, especially in Dhaka city. Experts said — with the advent of rainy season, it is usual to expect spike in the number of cases and urged people to pay attention to caution note, not to be panicked.

Dengue viruses are transmitted to humans through the bites of female mosquito named *Aedes aegypti*. Some 2.5 billion people — two fifths of the world's population — are now at risk of contracting dengue virus. Bangladesh is one of the most seriously affected countries in the world where dengue epidemic becomes a major public health problem.

The clinical features of dengue fever vary according to the age of the patient. Infants and young children may have a fever with rash. Older children and adults may have either a mild fever or the classical incapacitating disease with abrupt onset and high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pains and rash.

Dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) is a potentially deadly complication that is characterised by high fever, often with



A child, seen in the photos is suffering from dengue fever rests at a hospital.

enlargement of the liver and shock. The illness often begins with a sudden rise in temperature accompanied by facial flush and other flu-like symptoms.

Platelet (a type of blood cell) count starts falling after 5 to 6 days when the fever subsides and rises again usually 2 to 3 days later. People pay less attention during the period thinking that the fever is gone. Experts said that this is the most

critical time when people should be watchful and should seek medical advice if they experience any unusual feelings.

Laboratory investigations like platelet count or anti dengue antibody to diagnose dengue fever is recommended after 5 to 6 days. Before the period lab tests would reveal nothing as it takes time to appear the change in the blood.

Many people consider blood or

platelet transfusion an inevitable part of treatment in dengue fever. But in very few instances like shock, extreme low platelet count, transfusion is required. Aspirin should be avoided. As dengue fever is a viral disease, antibiotics are generally useless, but not contraindicated. It can be given if the physician thinks about other bacterial co-infections like typhoid, respiratory tract infection etc. Experts recommended symptomatic treatment for dengue fever like Paracetamol to lower temperature and more fluid intake to replenish lost fluid or blood.

At present, the only method of controlling or preventing dengue virus transmission is to combat the vector mosquitoes. Vaccines to immunise against dengue are underway but currently unavailable.

Destroy the breeding place of *Aedes* mosquito — clean storage water like earthenware jars, metal drums, concrete cisterns, discarded plastic food containers, used automobile tyres and other items that collect rainwater.

Although the incidence of infection is rising, proper medical treatment can reduce death rates to less than 1 percent. So, people should not get worried, rather to be watchful.

LIFESTYLE



PROF DR M KARIM KHAN

Diseases like Malaria, Filaria, Dengue etc. are transmitted by mosquito bite and the prevalence are significant in Bangladesh.

Use of mosquito coil is very common in this country. We have been using it for a long time as they are effective, cheap and easily available mosquito repellent. We rarely do bother about the composition of the product and their safety.

Typically they are made of a dried paste of pyrethrum powder. But they may contain Pyrethrum, Pyrithrin, Allethrin, Esbiothrine, Dibutyl Hydroxytoluene, Piperonyl butoxide etc. All are insecticide.

These coils are not safe enough proved by many studies done in different countries. As it is a source of fire, many accidents have already been happened. Burning of the body as well as houses happened in many occasion.

One mosquito coil produces same amount of particulate mass having diameter 2.5 micrometer, which is produced by 75-137 burning cigarettes. Emission of formaldehyde from one burning coil can be as high as that released from 51 burning cigarettes. Smoke from mosquito coils contains particulate matter, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon, aldehydes, ketones. All are injurious to health.

Study not only identified the above ingredients, they also identified a large volatile organic compounds including carcinogens and suspected carcinogens in mosquito coil smoke.

So from different studies it is evident that mosquito coils that we use every day are not safe enough. They may aggravate cough, there may be allergic manifestation, eye burning and may produce cancer. So think twice before use it.

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Knowledge is the key weapon fighting against Hepatitis

DR MD RAJIB HOSSAIN

Hepatitis or inflammation of liver caused by viruses (A, B, C, D and E) affects millions of people. Around one crore people have been suffering from hepatitis B and C virus in Bangladesh. Many of these people do not have adequate access to care — increasing their risk for premature death from liver cirrhosis and liver cancer. Most people who have been infected are unaware of asymptomatic infections in hepatitis until they reach the end stage liver disease. Experts say that awareness and knowledge are the key factors to prevent and control the huge burden of hepatitis.

Although there is vaccine that has been incorporated in national immunisation schedule, EPI against hepatitis B virus, it remains the most common cause of death due to viral hepatitis. There is also vaccine against hepatitis A that is transmitted through contaminated food and drink commonly affects children. This vaccine is however not included in EPI, but can be given to children to prevent hepatitis A.

Hepatitis C is the most fatal virus



One of the ways to prevent hepatitis virus B and C is blood safety.

which remains silent and there is no vaccine to prevent it. The ways to prevent these viruses (B and C) are safe blood transfusion, use of sterile medical instrument, safe sex practice and safe delivery practice of affected pregnant women and vaccination of the newborn.

If someone is diagnosed with hepatitis, especially B and C, is usually terrified with some misinformation that s/he will reach invariably to the end stage liver disease. But many of them are just carrier and need to be under follow up at regular interval. When the liver functions are impairing due to

viral activity, there are antiviral drugs to control viral activity and limit liver damage.

Prof Mohammed Ali, a pioneer of liver transplant surgery in Bangladesh and founder Secretary General of Liver Foundation Bangladesh stressed to implement national population based survey for detection of incidence of Hepatitis B and C in Bangladesh. He also emphasised on reduction of vaccine price and cost of medicine which would be within the reach of common people.

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Glaucoma and Physiotherapy Congress attended

STAR HEALTH REPORT

With a view to increasing the awareness about silent and blinding eye disease Glaucoma, Fourth World Glaucoma Congress was held recently at Paris, France. A 14 member team from Bangladesh Glaucoma Society attended the congress. Experts from Bangladesh Glaucoma Society delivered lecture, presentation and a colorful poster describing glaucoma situation and activities in Bangladesh.

Another group from Bangladesh Physiotherapy Association (BPA) — the President and Secretary General attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and World Physical Therapy Congress 2011 in Amsterdam, Netherlands organised by World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT).

Knowing for better living

In Bangladesh . . .

Dengue fever is more common in late July & incidence raises for the next 2-3 months !

Dengue is transmitted by *Aedes* mosquito

Use mosquito net to prevent mosquito bite

Don't allow unwanted water accumulation

Use only Paracetamol to reduce the fever

Consult your Doctor