

Newborns are vulnerable to environmental factors

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Neonatal mortality rate in Bangladesh is 37 per 1000 live births on an average; in some areas this is even much higher. Over the past few decades we have observed under 5 mortality coming down gradually whereas, on the contrary levels of newborn mortality is still beyond the acceptable limit. This will be very difficult for Bangladesh to achieve the MDG-4 targets by 2015 if, we cannot curb the neonatal mortality rate down to 22 per 1000 live births.

A combination of pneumonia, sepsis and meningitis, known as *Very Severe Disease (VSD)* of the newborn causes 50% of the newborn deaths in Bangladesh. The common signs are fever, hypothermia, difficult breathing, lethargy, convulsion, inability to feed and some more. Failure to take immediate appropriate medical care once these signs are obvious, may lead the newborn to death in a very short period of time.

Recently 'International Journal on Environmental Research and Public Health' published an important research



article from Bangladesh titled "Vulnerability of Newborns to Environmental Factors: Findings from Community Based Surveillance Data in Bangladesh". Scientists from Projahnmo study group demonstrated for the first time that environmental factors — the meteorological factors in particular — are closely associated with VSD of the newborn.

When the environmental temperature rises, incidence of VSD also increases — Dr Ishtiaq Mannan and his co-authors

reported in this article. When there is a combination of heat and humidity, the relationship is even stronger.

Researchers think that, the health of the newborns born in the poor rural households of Bangladesh are being influenced by the changes of the environmental factors and they indicated several pathways that may potentially lead to VSD.

Higher heat-humidity index may facilitate proliferation of bacteria in poorly

ventilated households. In some particular of the year people usually remain in the households due to rain and the over-crowding and related poor hygienic practice may enhance chances of infection.

Findings of this paper will have significant contribution in strengthening prevention and management strategies for VSD of the newborns. The seasonal pattern of VSD and the possible pathways should be incorporated in the awareness raising and health education programme for the families, targeting the delivered mothers and newborn caregivers in particular.

As the research revealed that risks are higher in certain months of the year, the health programme may consider taking a strategy of intensifying the disease surveillance at the community level.

Also at the health centres and the hospitals, these findings will help projecting preparedness to manage sick newborns as well as monitoring of coverage.

To see the full article please visit — http://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph/special_issues/risk_assessment/

LIFESTYLE

Tallying the benefits of chocolates



Chocolatics may have more reasons to indulge in a chocolate truffle or two today. New research from scientists at the University of Cambridge found that high levels of chocolate consumption are associated with a significant reduction in the risk of certain cardiovascular disorders.

By many measures, consumption of chocolate was linked to lower rates of stroke, coronary heart disease, high blood pressure and other cardiovascular conditions. But there was no beneficial effect on the risk for heart failure or diabetes.

Over all, the report, published in the British medical journal BMJ, showed that those in the group that consumed the most chocolate had decreases of 37 percent in the risk of any cardiovascular disorder and 29 percent in the risk for stroke.

Still, the lead author, Dr. Oscar H. Franco warned, "Chocolate may be beneficial, but it should be eaten in a moderate way, not in large quantities and not in binges," he said. "If it is consumed in large quantities, any beneficial effect is going to disappear."

Source: The New York Times

HEALTH bulletin

Fast eating elevates risk of obesity

A study conducted by New Zealand has revealed that fast eating can increase risks of obesity. Research showed that more than 50 percent of women who were habituated to eating fast faced risks of obesity.

Source: Medindia

Bad sleep ups blood pressure risk

Men who get the least deep sleep each night have a higher risk of hypertension, a recent study published in the journal Hypertension shows. Earlier studies have tied chronic sleep disorders and low levels of sleep to greater risks of heart disease and obesity, and even reduced life span. This new study showed those getting the least deep sleep were at 83 percent greater risk than those getting the most.

Reducing sudden death of infants

DR M KARIM KHAN

Omio, a two month old little cute boy came to me for a routine check up. He was perfectly all right in all respects. His parents are educated, cooperative and from a middle class family. Omio was born in a hospital by normal delivery and it was uneventful. Everything was going on smoothly and happily. But all on a sudden, Omio was found dead in the morning on his cot.

Last night, he was fine and took his last feeding around 1 a.m. and at that time he had no problem. It was very shocking to the parents and as well as to me. I could not believe it even. Medical history, physical examination, postmortem examination failed to provide any clue to the unexpected death.

This type of death in infants is called sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). By definition — it is sudden, unexpected death of the infant or young child for which no adequate cause is found after a thorough postmortem examination. It is one of the commonest causes of death in infants.

Risk factors for the SIDS are — pre-term low birth weight baby, male are more affected than female (60 percent male), multiple births,



low income, over crowded housing, maternal age less than 20 years, single unsupported mother, maternal smoking during pregnancy, parental smoking after birth, infants sleeps lying prone position, the infant is over heated due to excessive clothing or heating etc.

Sudden death of a child is one of the most distressing events that can happen to a family. To reduce the SIDS following guide line may be followed —

- Infants should put on sleep on their back; not their front or side.
- Over heating by heavy wrapping and high room temperature should be avoided.
- Parents should not smoke near

infant.

- Parents should have their baby in their bed room at least for 12 months.

- Parents should avoid sleeping with their infant on a sofa or arm chair.

We do not have any statistics regarding SIDS in Bangladesh. Fortunately deaths due to SIDS are declining now a days due to increased level of awareness in parents. Wish there should not be any sudden, unexpected death to any infants any more.

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Elder maltreatment likely to increase with ageing populations

Maltreatment of elderly people is an important public health problem. While there is little information regarding the extent of maltreatment in elderly populations, especially in developing countries, it is estimated that 4-6% of elderly people in high-income countries have experienced some form of maltreatment at home. However, older people are often afraid to report cases of maltreatment to family, friends, or to the authorities.

Elder maltreatment is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person. This type of violence constitutes a violation of human rights and includes physical, sexual, psychological, emotional; financial and material abuse; abandonment; neglect; and serious loss of dignity and respect.

Key Facts

- Around 4-6% of elderly people have experienced some form of maltreatment at home.
- Elder maltreatment can lead to serious physical injuries and long-term psychological consequences.
- Elder maltreatment is predicted to increase as many countries are experiencing rapidly ageing populations.
- The global population of people aged 60 years and older will more than double, from 542 million in 1995 to about 1.2 billion in 2025.

Source: World Health Organisation

Knowing for better living

One World, One Home, One Heart.

Cardiovascular diseases are No. 1 killer globally!

Take low fat diet

Be physically active

Ban smoking at your home

Eat vegetables and fresh fruits

Maintain healthy weight

Consult your Doctor



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