

# Unite in the fight against noncommunicable diseases

STAR HEALTH DESK

Noncommunicable diseases or NCDs like heart attacks and strokes, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases — kill about three in five people worldwide (63 percent), and cause great socioeconomic harm in all countries, particularly in developing countries like Bangladesh. Every year, 9 million people die too young from NCDs (under the age of 60). But implementing cost-effective interventions that reduce risk factors for NCDs will contribute up to two-thirds of the reduction in premature mortality. Global leaders urged to set a new international agenda on NCDs to take action against the epidemic, save millions of lives and enhance development initiatives.

While the international community has focused on communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, the four main non-communicable diseases have emerged relatively unnoticed in the developing world and are now becoming a global epidemic. However, such diseases could be significantly reduced and prevented.

Four types of noncommunicable dis-



eases — cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers, and chronic respiratory diseases — make the largest contribution to mortality in the majority of countries. These four NCDs are largely preventable by means of interventions that tackle four risk factors for NCDs: tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and harmful use of alcohol.

The impact of non-communicable diseases can be prevented with an approach that incorporates cost-effective, population-wide health-care interventions to address risk factors, known as public health “best buys”, and primary health-

care measures to treat those who have contracted or are at high risk of contracting such diseases. The widespread implementation of such interventions, which require modest investment, can lead to quick gains in counteracting the effects of non-communicable diseases.

The best buys for population-wide interventions include tobacco-control measures, including raising taxes and bans on advertising and smoking in public places; raising taxes on alcohol and enforcing bans on alcohol advertising; reducing salt intake; replacing trans-fats in foods with polyunsaturated fats; pro-

moting public awareness about diet and physical activity; and delivering hepatitis B vaccinations. Primary health-care interventions include counselling, multi-drug therapy and screening and early treatment for cervical and breast cancers.

The burden of non-communicable diseases in low- and middle-income countries goes beyond the fact that those countries are home to the world's largest populations. Unplanned urbanisation, ageing populations and the globalisation of trade and product marketing, particularly for tobacco, alcohol and food, have led to a rise in the risk factors of such diseases.

The lack of healthcare capacity and social protection systems in lower-income countries means that non-communicable diseases are more likely to cause people to become sick and die from them at earlier ages. The knowledge and technology to fight the onset and effects of non-communicable diseases already exist. It is the high time to act to save future generations from the health and socio-economic harm of such diseases.

Source: World Health Organisation (WHO)

## LIFESTYLE



Help prevent burnout

Managing all of your responsibilities at home and work can make it difficult to find some personal time. The American Academy of Paediatrics suggests how busy parents can help prevent burnout:

- Sneak in a few minutes of quiet relaxation at work, even if it is just by closing the door and breathing deeply, or by going for a quick walk.
- Try to arrive home happy, energetic and feeling refreshed.
- Find ways to reduce your load, such as by getting a healthy takeout dinner a few nights a week, or by hiring someone to help you with household chores.
- Share some responsibilities among all family members, such as by having everyone pitch in to clean up the house.
- Accept that you cannot always accomplish everything at once. Set priorities for what's most important.
- Treat yourself to some relaxation time during the weekend, whether it is by reading a book in a quiet room or by going to the gym alone.

## WORLD PHYSIOTHERAPY DAY

# Urge for a policy on Physiotherapy

DOLILUR RAHMAN

Physiotherapy is an integral part of modern medical science to deal with millions of movement related disorders and patients with physical disability to make them able to become fit, active and healthy. With a view to raising awareness on the necessity of Physiotherapy and portraying its status in the country, World Physiotherapy Day was observed on September 8 in Bangladesh along with the whole world. The day was observed with the slogan “Movement for Health”.

There are thousands of problems that can affect body movements and Physiotherapy is the main treatment and management protocol for these difficulties.

The demand, application and importance of Physiotherapy has been increasing very high. Movement related disorders and disability rate are increasing alarmingly worldwide due to spread of non-communicable diseases, obesity, diabetes, heart diseases, stroke, arthritis, pain, paralysis, cancer and other diseases which would be the greatest challenge of healthcare.

So all developed countries have



taken initiatives on priority basis to develop and modernise Physiotherapy treatment and education to make these patients fit and active. Therefore, it is necessary to give proper attention to them and develop with implementation of modern Physiotherapy treatment for them to make them active and functional.

Although the profession in Bangladesh has already passed 50 years, still there is no proper authority to regulate it. Many people are being treated by quack (without degree) and are frequently victimised. Authority concern is still turning a blind eye on it.

On World Physiotherapy Day, Physiotherapists around the coun-

try raised their voice to formulate an upgraded national policy. There is dire need to take urgent initiatives for modern Physiotherapy treatment and education in Bangladesh. There is need to make Bangladesh Physiotherapy College functional to create more skilled Physiotherapists for the treatment of large amount of disabled patients. Clinical and academic Physiotherapy posts have to be created, recruited in vacant posts by Government to provide proper physiotherapy treatment for millions of patients.

The writer is the President of Bangladesh Physiotherapy Society (BPS).  
E-mail: manipsart@gmail.com

## Study shows decrease in newborn mortality but calls for more action

STAR HEALTH REPORT

The number of newborns dying in Bangladesh has decreased — falling from 57 to 30 deaths per 1000 births in 2009, according to a new study conducted by researchers at the World Health Organisation, Save the Children and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

However, experts say more action is needed to keep declines in newborn mortality on track and reach Millennium Development Goal 4, a two thirds reduction in child mortality.

Programme Manager of Save the Children's Saving Newborn Lives initiative Dr Sayed Rubayat said, “We know that solutions as simple as — skilled attendance at birth, keeping newborns warm, exclusive breastfeeding and early postnatal care can keep them alive; but we need more well-trained front line health workers to implement these lifesaving practices.”

Dr Joy Lawn of Save the Children's Saving Newborn Lives programme pointed out that the global health worker crisis is the biggest factor in the deaths of mothers and children, and particularly the 3.3 million newborns dying needlessly each year.

Training more midwives and more community health workers will allow many more lives to be saved-expert pointed out.

## HEALTH bulletin

### Warning over global cancer level

The number of new cancer cases has increased by 20 percent in under a decade and now stands at 12 million a year, according to the World Cancer Research Fund. It warns that nearly a quarter of those cases are preventable. It calculated that 2.8m new cancers each year are linked to diet, exercise and obesity.



### World Physiotherapy Day observed by CRP

To observe the World Physiotherapy Day on September 8, Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) organised a seminar in its own premise. The seminar entitled “Contemporary Physiotherapy practice across the world and Bangladesh perspectives” was aimed at increasing awareness and proper use of physiotherapy in treatment.

Speakers in the seminar urged on providing people with affordable and sustainable solutions through physiotherapy and showing clearly that much can be done to prevent disabilities and provide better care.

## Knowing for better living

One World, One Home, One Heart.

Cardiovascular diseases cause 29% of all deaths 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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