

PERSPECTIVE

# Human organ trafficking in Bangladesh

DR MONIR MONIRUZZAMAN

Bangladesh is an emerging organ bazaar that has been in existence for more than a decade. It is operating by local and international patients, who buy organ within Bangladesh and then obtain the surgery mostly in India, as well as in Bangladesh, Thailand, Singapore etc. The sellers are the poor citizens, who eventually sell their body parts to get out of poverty.

In 1999, Bangladeshi Parliament passed the Organ Transplant Act, which explicitly states that anyone violating the law could be imprisoned for a minimum of three years to a maximum of seven years, and/or penalised with a minimum fine of 300,000 Taka. Nonetheless, the organ trade is growing in Bangladesh.

I have been conducting research on kidney trafficking for a decade. Between 2004 and 2005, I interviewed some kidney kingpins along with 33 kidney sellers, several recipients and doctors in Bangladesh. The situation is seriously flawed, deeply disturbing and certainly constitutes gross violation of human rights.

In Bangladesh, organ brokers fight over clients in major transplant centers. Brokers approach poor citizens, saying that kidney donation is lucrative, harmless, and noble act. Once they are tempted, brokers sell their kidneys and deceive them brutally.

I revealed that a broker paid a seller only 40,000 Taka, although the broker received 400,000 Taka from the recipient. In another case, the broker hired two thugs and beaten the seller, who did not want to donate his

kidney. No seller could take action against these brokers, as he was well protected by his elite clients.

Many wealthy recipients buy organs from the market, as they do not want to put their family members at risk. Typically, they hide their kidney shopping, saying publicly that they are unable to match tissues with family members, or their families are unwilling to donate their organs. However, no recipient is ever prosecuted for their illegal dealing.

Bangladeshi doctors do not directly participate in organ trade, but they intentionally overlook organ trafficking. When the President of World Transplantation Society questioned a Bangladeshi Nephrologist about my research findings, the Nephrologist replied in few words that the Transplant Act is "strictly main-

tained" in Bangladesh. I also confronted another Nephrologist at BSMMU showing evidence that illegal organ transplants were performed in the hospital. The Nephrologist quietly replied, "We always maintain ethical protocol, but sometimes there might be very few cases that we are unaware of." When I challenged him again, he concluded that doctors are not police and their role does not constitute spying on recipients. Utterly, Bangladeshi doctors put a blind eye on the source of organs; they follow the market ethos.

80% of my interviewed kidney sellers did not receive the payment that they were promised. Bangladeshi sellers experience many health hazards after selling their kidneys. Yet, none of these sellers received the promised post-operative care.

Organ trafficking is gross violation of justice to the poor, who do not deserve losing parts from their malnourished bodies. In Bangladesh, it is urgent to:

- i) create awareness against organ trafficking;
- ii) establish a cadaveric organ donation programme;
- iii) encourage organ donation from family members;
- iv) introduce a national registry to record recipients and donors information;
- v) set up a commission who verify the relationship between recipients and donors; and
- vi) prosecute all criminals to ensure that justice prevails.

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FOOD VALUE

## Sweeter than honey!

Is honey the sweetest natural thing you have tasted? Well, its benefits are sweeter than its taste! Try the following tips to help your health everyday and feel its sweetness!



**1. Honey and cinnamon:** Grind cinnamon to powder and mix it with honey to make a paste; take a teaspoon full of this paste everyday for cardiac problems, pain in bones and high blood pressure. This paste can also be applied on pimples directly to cure them.

**2. Honey and lemon:** Mix a teaspoon of honey and few drops of lemon in a glass of hot water and drink to reduce cough and cold. Honey and lemon can be added to tea instead of milk to avoid fatness.

**3. Honey and milk:** Mix a teaspoon of honey with a cup of hot milk and drink it before bedtime. It is not only a healthy drink but also helps to have a good sound sleep. Also, milk and honey paste with rose water can be applied to skin for softness and glow.

**4. Honey as a substitute of sugar:** Use honey syrup in desserts instead of sugar caramel to avoid sugar calories and carbohydrate.

**5. Honey and glycerin:** A mixture of honey and glycerin can be applied on lips for dryness. It can also be applied on other parts of the body to relieve dryness.

The write-up is compiled by Sharmeen Rahman. E-mail: alsherryriakuwait2000@yahoo.com

### HEALTH bulletin



#### Eyelid marks warn of heart attacks

Xanthelasmata (yellow markings on the eyelids) is a sign of increased risk of heart attack and other illnesses, according to a study published on the British Medical Journal (BMJ) website.

The study revealed that patients with Xanthelasmata which are mostly made up of cholesterol, were 48 percent more likely to have a heart attack. Cardiologists said the findings could be used by doctors to help diagnose at-risk patients.

#### Hospital births move has halved newborn deaths

A campaign encouraging women in China to give birth in hospital has cut newborn deaths by half, says a study in The Lancet.

Researchers from Beijing and London found that babies born in hospital were two to three times less likely to die in their first month than those born at home.

## Role of Anaesthesiologists: From surgery to critical care

DR MD WAHIDUR RAHMAN

Most people think of anaesthesiologist only as the "doctor behind the mask" who helps patients sleep during surgery without pain and who wakes them up when surgery is over. Let us lift the doctor's mask and take a look at the responsibilities of an anaesthesiologist.

In general, an anaesthesiologist is a medical doctor who cares for a patient before, during and immediately following a surgical or medical procedure by administering appropriate anaesthesia and moni-

toring the patient for reactions and complications and to ensure comfort and manage pain.

An anaesthesiologist's job description is not limited to a traditional surgical setting in a hospital or medical center. Today, anaesthesiologists have many options available including working in outpatient surgical centers, labour and delivery units, pain management clinics, critical and intensive care units (stabilising a patient's condition), teaching and research.

Anaesthesiologists also coordinate the care of patients in the

intensive care unit because of their extensive training in clinical physiology/pharmacology and resuscitation.

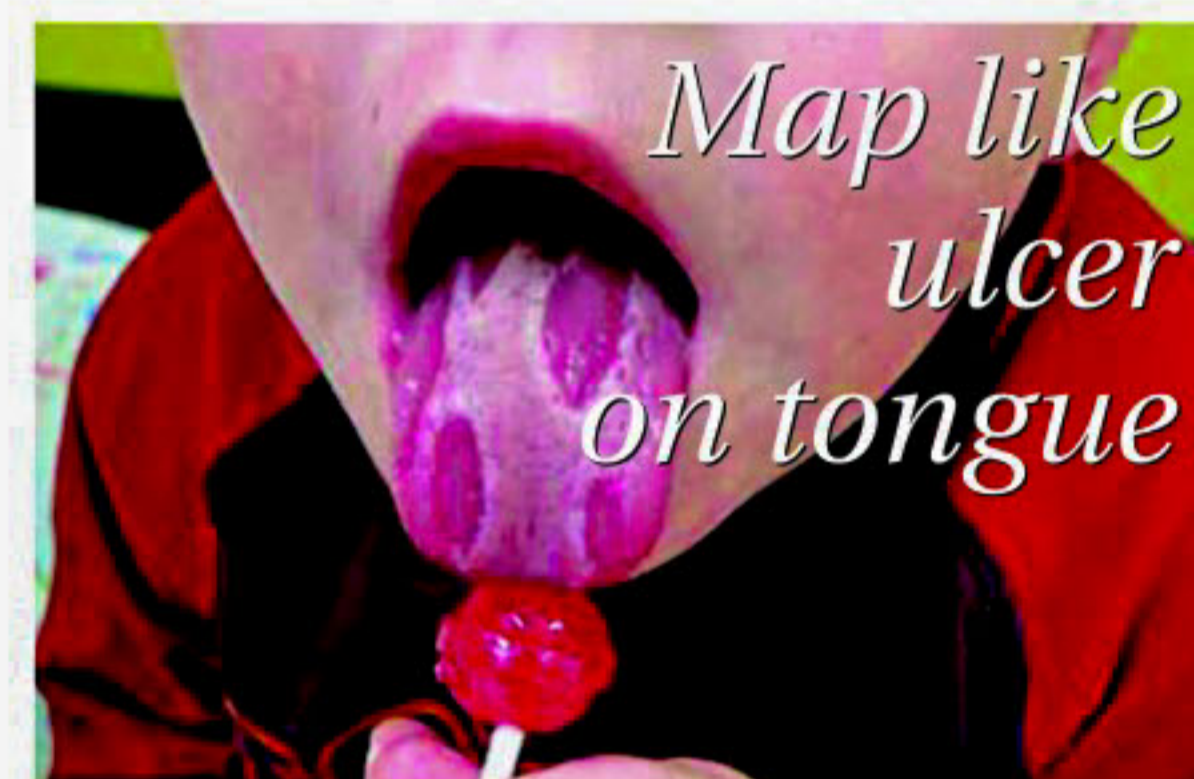
Anaesthesiologists also possess the medical knowledge and technical expertise to deal with many emergency and trauma situations. They provide airway management, cardiac and pulmonary resuscitation, advanced life support and pain control.

As consultants, they play an active role in stabilising and preparing the patient for emergency surgery. Anaesthesiologists are the vanguard of those who are developing new therapies for chronic pain syndromes and cancer-related pain.

In addition to providing patient care, an anaesthesiologist often is responsible for managing the resources of the operating suite, including the efficient use of operating rooms, supplies, equipment and personnel.

In a nutshell, an anaesthesiologist's job is to keep patients alive while the surgeon does things that could kill them.

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Map like ulcer on tongue

DR M KARIM KHAN

Parents sometimes come to us with their kids having history of recurrent map like ulceration on the upper surface of the tongue. These ulcers changes shape and sizes and they appear and disappear. They do not affect any growth and development of the child. Affected kids complaint of burning sensation and irritation while taking food and sometimes they refuse to take food because of spicy feeling.

We call this condition Geographic tongue or Glossitis areata migrans. 1-2% of children may have this problem below 5 years of age. As it is a recurrent condition, parents become anxious and pay visit to doctors frequently.

Fortunately it is a benign condition and does not require any investigation; diagnosis is straight forward, done by examining the tongue. Rarely this condition may be associated with anemia, diabetes mellitus and skin disorder.

Mainstay of management is to reassure the parents and talk to them about the nature of the condition and relieve them from undue anxiety. Vitamins, minerals and maintenance of oral hygiene may help. By the age of 5-7 years it usually goes off automatically without any long term problem or complications. So please do not get worried.

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## Knowing for better living

One World, One Home, One Heart.

Every year, 17.1 million lives are claimed by the global burden of cardiovascular diseases!



Take low fat diet

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Be physically active

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Ban smoking at your home

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Eat vegetables and fresh fruits

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Maintain healthy weight

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Consult your Doctor

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