

# Managing cardiovascular risks in resource poor settings

**STAR HEALTH DESK**

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) that include heart disease and stroke, are the world's largest killer, claiming 17.1 million lives a year. Over 80 percent of these deaths take place in low- and middle-income countries like Bangladesh. Global experts predicted that at least 80 percent of these deaths could be avoided if the main risk factors, tobacco, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, are controlled.

People in low- and middle-income countries who suffer from CVDs and other noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) have less access to effective and equitable healthcare services which respond to their needs including early detection services. As a result, many people in these countries die younger from CVDs and other noncommunicable diseases, often in their most productive years. The poorest people are affected the most.

In low resource settings, integrated community-based prevention programmes for NCDs can play most important role in prevention of millions of deaths and disabilities from CVDs. The programmes should be aimed at reducing the risks throughout the entire population with strategies that target individuals at high risk or with established disease.

Examples of population-wide interventions that can be implemented to reduce CVDs include comprehensive tobacco control policies, taxation to reduce the intake of foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt, building walking and cycle ways to increase physical activity, providing healthy school meals to children.

Medication for treating CVDs and controlling its risk factors should be made inexpensive and available. People at high risk can be identified using simple tools such as specific risk



prediction charts. If people are identified early, inexpensive treatment is available to prevent many heart attacks and strokes.

Survivors of a heart attack or stroke are at high risk of recurrences and at high risk of dying from them. The risk of a recur-

rence or death can be substantially lowered with a combination of drugs to lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

Bangladesh is experiencing epidemiological transition from communicable to noncommunicable diseases like CVDs. It is

the high time to act. There is an urgent need for increased government investment through national programmes aimed at prevention and control of CVDs and other noncommunicable diseases.

**Key messages to protect heart health**

- Tobacco use, an unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity increase the risk of heart attacks and strokes.
- Engaging in physical activity for at least 30 minutes every day of the week will help to prevent heart attacks and strokes.
- Eating at least five servings of fruit and vegetables a day, and limiting your salt intake to less than one teaspoon a day, also helps to prevent heart attacks and strokes.
- Check and control your cardiovascular risk. Know your blood pressure, blood sugar, blood cholesterol or lipid. Consult a physician to manage these risk factors.

**HEALTH TIPS**



## Help prevent choking in children

Experts offer the following suggestions to help prevent choking on food among infants and toddlers:

- Teach your child to sit quietly while eating and to thoroughly chew and swallow food.
- Do not let your youngster play, run or ride in a car with food, gum or candy in the mouth.
- Carefully inspect food labels for information about choking risks.
- Do not feed young children foods that are hard and smooth that could easily get stuck in a windpipe. Examples include foods with nuts, seeds, small pits or popcorn.
- Soft foods that could choke a child should be cut into very small pieces. Examples include raw fruits and vegetables, cheese and hot dogs.

**HEALTH bulletin**

**Car fumes raise heart attack risk**

Breathing in heavy traffic fumes can trigger a heart attack, according to a study published in the British Medical Journal. Heart attack risk is raised for about six hours post-exposure and goes down again after that, researchers found.

**Breastfeeding tied to kids' brainpower**

Kids who were breastfed as babies had higher scores on tests of vocabulary and reasoning at age five than those who were not breastfed, according to a new study from the Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Essex. Researchers said that there are essential fatty acids in breast milk which are good for cell development and brain development in particular.

## Rabies: Taking notice of a neglected disease

DR M SALIM UZZAMAN

Rabies is a disease with the highest case fatality rate (100 percent) of any known infectious disease, but also completely preventable if proper action can be taken. Although there are safe and effective vaccines available, usage in developing countries is low due to the high cost and low level of awareness.

In Bangladesh, it is still a neglected tropical disease that kills on an average 2,000 people every year. Sadly, over 50 percent of these deaths are children under 15 years of age. Rabies is caused by a virus which attacks the nervous system. People usually get rabies from the bite of a rabid animal-infected domestic dog (98 percent cases), infected cat bite or scratch.

Every rabies death is preventable with the modern cell culture rabies vaccines and rabies immunoglobulin (RIG) that are currently available.

Inhalation of aerosolised rabies virus is also a potential non-bite route of exposure usually seen in laboratory workers. Other contact, such as petting a rabid animal or contact with the blood, urine or feces of a rabid animal, does not constitute an exposure and is not an indication for prophylaxis.



Rabies infects the central nervous system, causing encephalopathy and ultimate death. Early symptoms of rabies in humans are nonspecific, consisting of fever, headache and general malaise and feels pins, numbness or itching and at the bite site.

As the disease progresses, neurological symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, hyper-salivation, difficulty swallowing, hydrophobia (fear of water) and aerophobia (fear of air). Death usually occurs within days of the onset of symptoms.

**Five vital steps for any animal-bite care:**

- Do vigorous washing of the wound thoroughly with soap and plenty of water for 10-15 minutes, and seek

medical attention immediately.

- Then, apply any antiseptic or povidone iodine and ensure tetanus prophylaxis.
- Use of appropriate antibiotic (if necessary) to prevent wound sepsis.
- Avoid suturing, the wound(s) should not be dressed or bandaged unless necessary.
- Active immunisation with Anti-Rabies Cell Culture Vaccine (CCV) that has been proven to be safe and effective recommended by World Health Organisation (WHO). Add passive immunisation with Rabies Immunoglobulin at bite site if recommended by a doctor.

The writer is a Fellow, Nuffield Institute for Health (Leeds University, UK), Specialised in Tropical Medicine and Infectious Diseases. He is currently working at Mitford Hospital, Dhaka. E-mail: msalimuzzaman@hotmail.com

## Symposium held for cardiac cath lab nurse and technologist

STAR HEALTH REPORT

With a view to increasing the number of skilled manpower involved in cardiac intervention (angiogram/angioplasty), Bangla Interventional Therapeutics (BIT) organised the first "Advanced Cardiac Cath Lab Nurse and Technologist Symposium" in collaboration with the National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute (NHF&RI). About 200 nurses and technologists working in different cardiac cath lab received hands on training on cardiac intervention in the symposium held recently in Bangladesh.

BIT is a platform dedicated to interventional cardiology formed mainly by Bangla speaking people in this region with the spirit of language movement. Renowned interventional cardiologist of Bangladesh Prof Md Afzalur Rahman, who is the Course Director of BIT and Dr Robin Chakrabarty, another Course Director from India have designed different BIT courses for doctors, nurses and technologists who work in the cath lab.



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29 September 2011

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- Eat vegetables and fresh fruits
- Maintain healthy weight
- Consult your Doctor

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