

Care for women in menopause

SHAMEEM AKHTAR

The menopause signals the end of a woman's reproductive ability. So it represents the end of her need for contraception, but also the beginning of a new era in which changes in metabolism and psyche may become prominent.

A woman's earlier health status, reproductive patterns, life style and environmental factors largely determine her health status at menopause. It is well accepted that socio-cultural characteristics may affect the onset of menopause and its characteristics.

Menopause may have a significant effect on women's quality of life. Due to the resulting lack of female hormones, women suffer from various kinds of physical and psychological problems.

Many studies found different health problems in women to some extent. Bangladesh Institute of Research for Promotion of Essential & Reproductive Health and Technologies (BIRPERHT) conducted a study on menopausal women. Among the respondents, 71.1% had depression, 41.4% had waist



pain, 34% had experienced sudden warm sensation, 22.8% showed vertigo, 10.5% showed burning sensation in hands/feet, 10.7% occurred swelling. Various mental problems were reported by the women during menopause like restlessness, ill tempera-

ment, increased feeling of stress, insomnia etc.

Few months ago, I talked to some slum dwellers menopausal women in Dhaka city about different aspects of end of reproductive years and found many problems they were living with in silence.

Menopause is a largely neglected issue in public health of developing countries like Bangladesh. Women towards the end of reproductive years suffer from various physical and psychological problems. Menopause is associated with increase risk of cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis and ovarian, breast and uterine cancer. Anxiety and depression are also associated with menopause. So it is an important life event that warrant special health care at that time.

In this country, there is very limited awareness of menopause and its consequences. Programmes should be undertaken in the community level involving women, men and health service providers. Health programme should pay adequate attention on the emergency of this issue. Information on various aspects of end of reproductive health should be disseminated to menopausal women. Education and awareness may help to make this neglected part of their life meaningful and worth living.

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NATIONAL IMMUNISATION DAY

Bring your child to get vaccinated for Polio



Today is the first round of National Immunisation Day in 2012. Bring your under-5 years old child at nearest immunisation centre to get vaccinated against Polio and make Bangladesh free of the disease.

HEALTH bulletin

British Heart Foundation says no kissing, just hard CPR

The British Heart Foundation is urging people to forget "mouth-to-mouth" and to concentrate on chest compressions when performing CPR. It has been seen that many feel worried about the idea of giving the kiss of life. Experts from the foundation now recommend that anyone who does not have CPR training should ignore the kiss of life in favour of hard and fast compressions in the centre of the chest.

Source: BBC



Academic performance at school linked to exercise

Children who get more exercise also tend to do better in school, whether the exercise comes as recess, physical education classes or getting exercise on the way to school, according to a study published in the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine.

Hepatitis C vaccine trial promising

An early clinical trial of a hepatitis C vaccine has shown promising results, according to researchers at Oxford University. The virus spreads through blood-to-blood contact can go unnoticed for years, but during this time it can cause considerable liver damage. Designing a vaccine has been difficult as the virus changes its appearance.

Psychological impact of climate change

Disaster recovery plan for Bangladesh needs a psychological dimension

GRAHAM EDWARD POWELL

With climate change comes global warming and a rise in sea levels, and Bangladesh is already the second lowest lying country in the world. A higher sea level makes it easier for freak tides and cyclones to breach the coastal and tidal defences, and the effects of climate change also increases the risks of river flooding and earthquake.

The effects of such disasters touch all. The Bangladesh Association of Psychiatrists (BAP) conducted a survey 2 months after the cyclone Sidr of November 2007, assessing 750 survivors. Of these, 25.2% had post-traumatic stress disorder, 17.9% had major depressive disorder, 16.3% had somatoform disorder and 14.6% had a mixed anxiety and depressive disorder. Furthermore, 17.1% reported the death of a family member, and 82.9% were homeless.

The frequency and severity of climatic events is going to increase, creating a high need for psychological management, not just a high need for practical preventative steps and for the preparation of the physical aspects of the disaster recovery plan (food, sanitation, water and so on).

The disaster recovery plan for Bangladesh needs a psychological dimension, in which all front line staff (army, relief workers, aid work-



A climate change refugee after cyclone Aila.

ers, community workers) have some knowledge of psychological first aid (the importance of rapport, the need for active listening, the promotion of problem solving rather than despair, basic do's and don'ts when dealing with traumatised people).

After the first aid comes a further level of psychological management, the setting up of psychosocial support in the community, the profiling of psychosocial needs, the launching of psychosocial activities, activities for children and for adults that promote psychological adjustment and build on residual community supports.

After this there is another level, identifying the vulnerable and the most affected and providing specific psychological advice for them.

Finally there is formal psychological treatment from those who do not recover.

Yet there are only 39 clinical psychologists in the whole country. Therefore in planning disaster recovery there needs to be a manpower development plan that includes the provision of more clinical psychologists, who can train people in psychological first aid, train people in how to promote psychosocial supports, and who can treat the worst affected whose problems become chronic.

The disaster recovery plan for Bangladesh needs to help the survivors survive psychologically.

The author is a Member of the Board of Trustees, The Governing Body of the British Psychological Society (BPS) & Clinical Psychologist, UK.

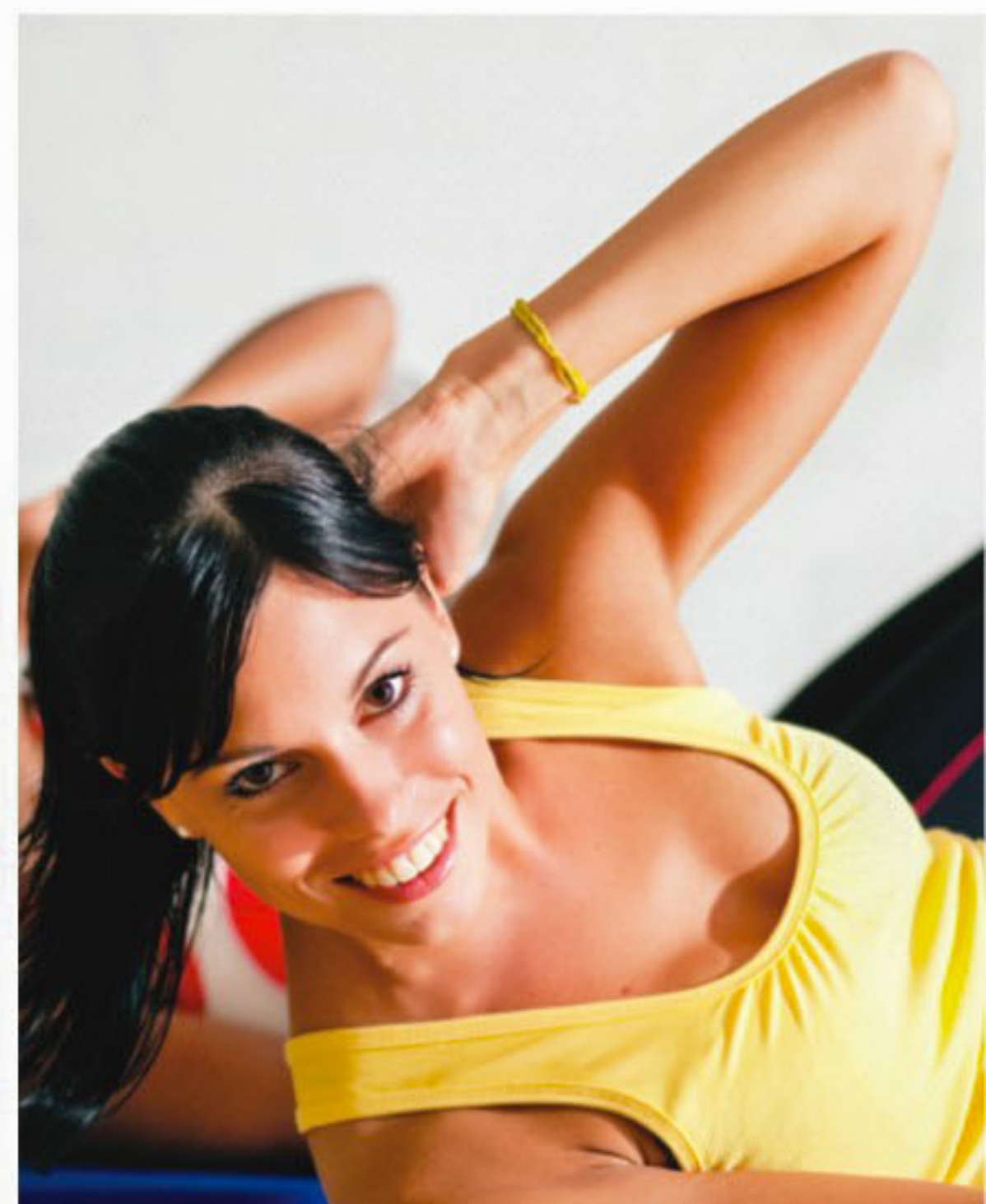
+HEALTH TIPS

Exercising with Arthritis

Physical activity, an important part of arthritis management, can help improve pain and joint flexibility. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends these low-impact exercises that offer benefits without undue strain on the joints:

- Aerobic exercises, including swimming, biking, water aerobics, dancing, walking at a fast pace, and gardening.
- Exercises that strengthen the muscles, including calisthenics and weight training.
- Exercises that help improve balance, including tai chi, walking backward and standing on one foot.

Source: Medline Plus



Physical activity, an important part of arthritis management, can help improve pain and joint flexibility.



Knowing for better living

In Bangladesh ...

60% of men smoke cigarette!

- Avoid smoking in public place
- Avoid smoking in working place
- Exercise regularly
- Drink plenty of water
- Keep away from stressful situations
- Consult your Doctor



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