

Shaping future of the children with autism

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Every year on 2nd April, World Autism Awareness Day is being observed for creating awareness about this neuro-developmental disorder. These days, many people living in Bangladesh are familiar with the term "Autism". Even, we see mothers not living in urban areas bringing their child when they find a bit unusual about their child.

Children with autism find it very difficult to express their feelings, communicate the way they would like to and sometimes are associated with some odd behaviours. When parents bring their child to a physician to know what is wrong with their adored child, it is hard to unveil the news that their child is suffering from Autism.

But these children need special care and education, which will help them to grow in a better way. We usually refer them to the



newly developed "Autism Center" in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) where they find other parents and feel that they are not only parents having children with autism. These parents can share their feelings, talk about their distress and feel better in some extent.

There are many schools are now developed in Dhaka city for

these special children. Every year, BSMMU arranges a workshop for the parents having child with autism. It helps them to learn ways to deal with their children. Above all, parents are indeed the best teacher for their children in every way.

Many parents do not know where to go first with their child. For proper diagnosis, a psychiatrist can help. There is no spe-

cific investigation that can confirm autism. Managing children with autism is a multi disciplinary teamwork including psychiatrist, child neurologist, paediatrician, nutritionist, special education teacher, clinical psychologist and the school with special education.

One can get puzzled with this team approach? We suggest — when you think that your child is

different from other children, you go for a consultation to a psychiatrist first. Then s/he will provide you other information. Sometimes children with autism develop some hyper-activities or some odd behaviour and need regular consultation from a psychiatrist as they can prescribe some medicine, which may reduce the hyper-activities and behavioural problems.

Being in a third world country like Bangladesh with limited resources, we have strong family bonding comparing with that of western countries. Along with the available services, we can use this well built family support to deal and manage our gifted children. Let us work hand in hand and make a secure future for these children.

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MEDICAL ADVANCEMENT



Richard Norris is seen before (L) and after (R) his face transplant surgery in this combination of undated handout photos released by the University of Maryland Medical Center, USA.

Full face transplant: a life changing surgery

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Face transplant surgery has transformed the face and the lives of several people. It has raised high hope to the people who have permanent disfigurement in their face and lost several structures of face in accidents.

The most recent face transplant surgery done at the University of Maryland Medical Center, USA showed the most success. Experts termed it as the world's most comprehensive face transplant — allowing a 37-year-old man to emerge from behind a mask 15 years after a gun accident almost killed him. It seems to be the most aesthetically successful to date, according to photographs and video shared with reporters at a news conference.

Richard Norris of Hillsville, Virginia, was shot in the face in 1997 and lost his nose, lips and most movement in his mouth. Since then, he has had multiple life-saving and reconstructive surgeries but none could repair him to the extent where he felt he could return to society.

But last week, during a 36-hour operation, surgeons gave him a new face from an anonymous donor. He could already move his tongue, open and close his eyes and was recovering much faster than doctors expected. He also can shave and brush his teeth, which he never even expected.

Tips to prevent diarrhoea

With the advent of summer and lack of safe drinking water and sanitation, an early outbreak of diarrhoea has affected thousands of people across Bangladesh. Do not let this sudden digestive attack leave you stranded in the bathroom! By taking simple preventive measures, you can decrease your chances of suffering from diarrhoea.

Try the following tips:

- Be sure to store raw meats away from fresh fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator.
- Clean cooking surfaces before and after preparing foods at your home. Be cautious while taking food outside your home.
- Cook food thoroughly and to the proper temperatures.
- Do not drink from unprotected sources.
- Use good hand-washing techniques — scrub with soap before taking food and after handling things.
- Maintain proper hygiene practice in your daily life.

If you catch diarrhoea by any chance, never forget to replace the fluid loss by taking oral rehydration saline (ORS) and other liquid food.

Childhood tuberculosis: a hidden epidemic

STAR HEALTH DESK

Tuberculosis (TB) often goes undiagnosed in children from birth to 15 years old because they lack access to health services or the health workers who care for them are unprepared to recognise the signs and symptoms of TB in this age group. With better training and harmonisation of the different programmes that provide health services for children, serious illness and death from TB could be prevented in thousands of children every year, experts from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Stop TB Partnership urged.

Although we have made progress on TB, children have been left behind, and childhood TB remains a hidden epidemic in most countries. It is the high time to act and address it everywhere.

Most families who are vulnerable to TB live in poverty; know little about the disease and how to obtain care for it. When an adult is diagnosed with TB, no attempt is made to find out whether children in the household also have the disease. This is a crucial step, since most children catch TB from a parent or relative.

Any child living with a TB patient



having an unexplained fever and failure to thrive may have the disease and should be evaluated by a health worker for TB. We should train all health workers who care for pregnant women, babies and children to check patients for TB risk, signs and symptoms and refer them for TB preventive therapy or TB treatment as needed.

A recent study in Bangladesh found that the number of children found to have TB more than trebled when workers at 18 community health centres received special training on childhood TB.

At least half a million babies and children become ill with TB each

year and as many as 70,000 are estimated to die of the disease worldwide. Children under 3 years of age and those with severe malnutrition or compromised immune systems are at greatest risk for developing TB.

The only vaccine currently available for TB is the Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG), which offers limited protection against severe forms of TB, such as TB meningitis, in young children. Scientists are actively searching for a fully effective vaccine to protect children and adults against all forms of TB.

Source: World Health Organisation

HEALTH bulletin



Too much sitting can kill you!

For better health, try standing up more, a new study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine suggests. Those who spend 11 or more hours a day sitting are 40 percent more likely to die over the next three years regardless of how physically active they are otherwise, researchers say.

Weight loss may prevent leaky bladder in diabetes

Overweight women with diabetes may be able to cut their risk of urine leakage if they shed some pounds, a new study from Journal of Urology suggests.

Extra pounds, especially in the belly, are considered a risk factor for urinary incontinence. Type 2 diabetes, which often goes hand-in-hand with obesity, is also a risk factor for urine leakage.

Researchers have found that when overweight diabetic women drop even a modest amount of weight, they can curb their risk of developing incontinence, apart from other benefits of weight loss.

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