

# Managing hypertension, a rising concern

PROFESSOR RK KHANDAKER

Bangladesh is going through demographic and health transitions, resulting in change in the age structure of its population and rise of noncommunicable (NCD) diseases like heart diseases, diabetes, cancers, lung diseases etc. Cardiovascular disease has become the top most cause of deaths in Bangladesh and hypertension (HTN) or high blood pressure is the most important risk factor behind it.

Recently conducted NCD Risk factor survey 2010 by the Government of Bangladesh on a nationally representative sample reported prevalence of HTN as 17.9% among the adults aged 25 years or more. This survey estimated that about 12 million people in Bangladesh (6.2 million men and 5.8 million women) are hypertensive. Around one third of the respondents in the survey (32.9%) never measured their blood pressure which signifies a huge number of people are living with HTN — a silent epidemic.

Reducing blood pressure (BP) can decrease cardiovascular risks and this can be achieved by lifestyle measures as



well as with the medication of cost-effective drugs.

Lifestyle changes should be the initial approach to HTN management and it include dietary interventions (reducing salt, increasing Potassium, alcohol avoidance and diet control), weight reduction, tobacco cessation, physical exercise and stress management.

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) study showed that a diet low in sodium (less 1500 mg per day or around half teaspoon per day) and high in Potassium rich fruits, vegetables and calcium is helpful in treating HTN.

Exercise is critically important, especially in children and young adults with HTN. Being overweight increases the

chances of developing high blood pressure. A body mass index (BMI) between 25 and 30 is considered overweight. Losing as little as 10 to 20 pounds can help lower blood pressure and heart disease risk.

To successfully and healthfully lose weight — and keep it off — most people need to subtract about 500 calories per day from their diet to lose about 1 pound per week or a combined approach of physical exercise and diet restriction. Giving up smoking and managing stress will also help lower BP.

If lifestyle measures are not enough to lower BP, consult a physician for drug therapy combined with comprehensive management.

Optimal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg. Starting at age 20, we should have a blood pressure screening at healthcare visit or once every 2 years, if your blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg.

**The writer is the Chairman, Hypertension Committee, National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute. Email: nhfadmin@agni.com**

## RESEARCH

### 1 in 3 adults has HTN, 1 in 10 has diabetes

According to The World health statistics 2012 report released recently, one in three adults worldwide, has raised blood pressure, known as hypertension (HTN) — a condition that causes around half of all deaths from stroke and heart disease. One in ten adults has diabetes. For the first time in the report, World Health Organisation (WHO) includes information from 194 countries on the percentage of men and women with raised blood pressure and blood glucose levels.

This report is further evidence of the dramatic increase in the conditions that trigger heart disease and other chronic illnesses, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Noncommunicable diseases like heart and lung disease, diabetes and cancer currently cause almost two thirds of all deaths worldwide.

Experts said that most of these people affect remain undiagnosed, although many of these cases could be treated with low-cost medications, which would significantly reduce the risk of death and disability from heart disease and stroke.

The report also revealed the evidence of increasing incidence of obesity. In all parts of the world, women are more likely to be obese than men, and thus at greater risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers.

It also focused on the low quality and severe scarcity of date on death registration. In low- and middle-income countries, less than 10% of deaths are registered.

## HEALTH bulletin

### Older parents more likely to have an autistic child

Children born to a parent over age 35 are at greater risk for developing an autism spectrum disorder — but the risk is the same whether just one or both parents are older, according to a new study published in Annals of Epidemiology.



### Milk may boost brain function

A glass of milk could boost brain and mental performance, reports study published in the International Dairy Journal.

Researchers found that adults with higher intakes of milk and milk products scored significantly higher on memory and other brain function tests than those who drank little to no milk.

Milk drinkers were five times less likely to fail the test, compared to non milk drinkers.

# Adulterated food and its health hazards

PROF DR M KARIM KHAN

Food adulteration has become a very common practice in our country and we are consuming these foods almost everyday, which have numerous harmful effects to our health.

Food adulteration means anything adding or subtracting with food making it injurious to health. This adulteration may be done intentionally or unintentionally. Intentional adulteration is a criminal act and punishable offense.



Food adulteration with poisonous chemical like formalin is widespread and regularly applied on fish. To save ourselves and our descendants, we have to fight all together against these ill trends of adulteration.

Food adulteration with poisonous chemical like formalin is widespread and regularly applied on fish, fruit, meat and milk that causes different types of cancers, asthma and skin diseases.

Colouring dyes, calcium carbide, urea, brunt engine oil and even some permitted preservatives are used in excessive amount that affect multiple organs of human body. Mostly it causes cancer like colon, peptic ulcer diseases, chronic liver diseases including

cirrhosis and liver failure, electrolyte imbalance and eventually kidney failure.

Heart diseases, blood disorders and bone marrow abnormality are also detected. Chance of malignancy increases and neurological impairment or brain functions are also often compromised. Skin problems are frequently seen including allergic manifestation.

We know it is a punishable offence and it creates health hazards and can kill human being, even then we forget everything just for business interest.

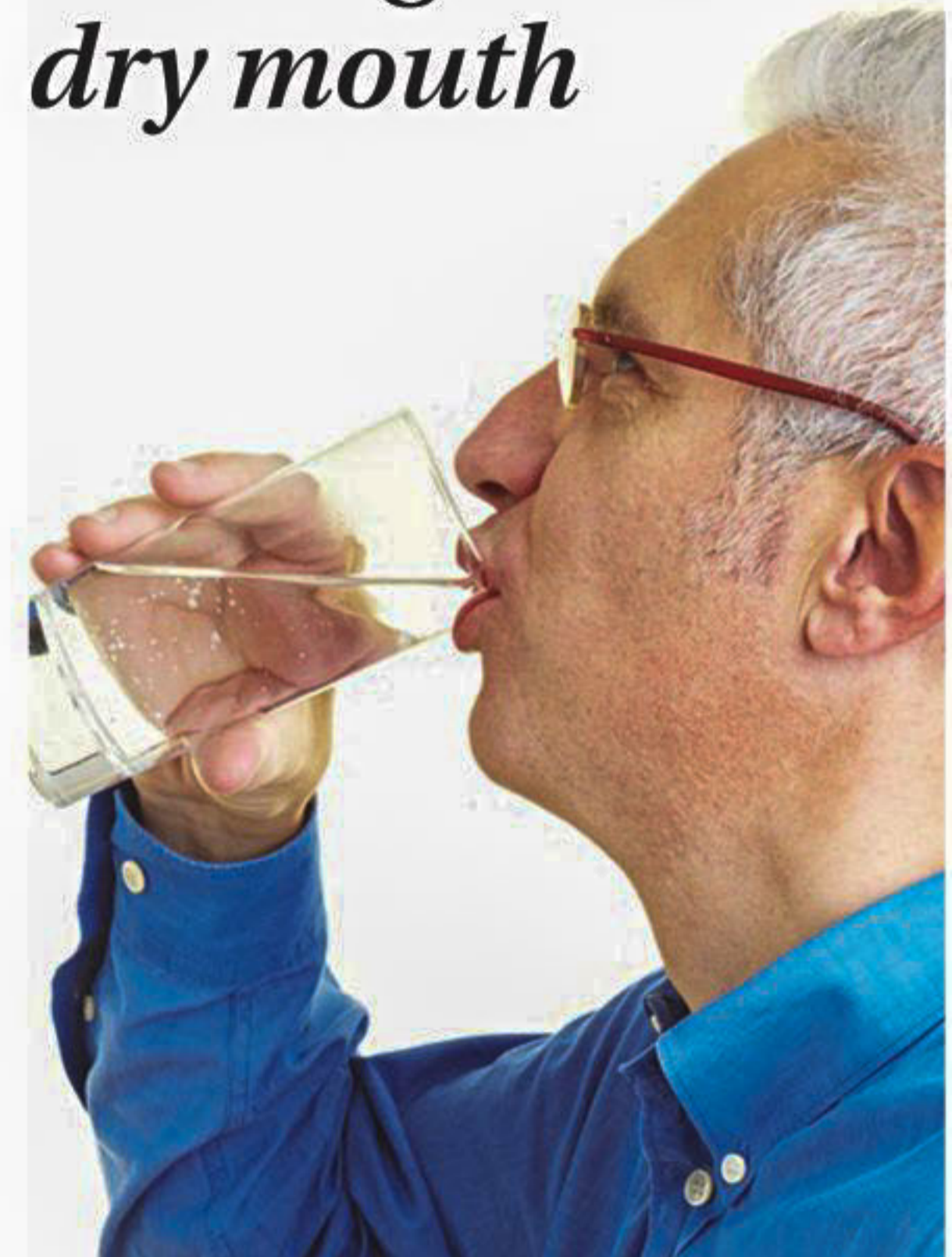
Now to save ourselves and our descendants, we have to fight all together against these ill trends of adulteration. Government should also take serious action with tougher law against those culprits.

We all should make aware the general people about the serious health impact of taking adulterated food. Such sincere community resistance can alter the scenario and we need to do it right now. Take care of your food means taking care of your health.

**The writer works at the Department of Paediatrics, Community Based Medical College, Mymensingh. Email: mmukhan@gmail.com**

## HEALTH TIPS

### Dealing with dry mouth



Dry mouth is more than just uncomfortable. A lack of saliva to moisten your mouth also can lead to tooth damage, the American Dental Association warns. The association offers these suggestions for people with dry mouth:

- Chew sugar-free gum.
- Suck on sugar-free hard candies.
- Use an oral rinse.
- Use an artificial saliva solution. Speak with your dentist first.
- Discuss with a doctor or dentist any medications you are taking that could be causing dry mouth.

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