

Strategies for preventing suicide

Every year, almost one million people die by suicide around the world. Young people are increasingly vulnerable to suicidal behaviours. Worldwide, suicide is one of the three leading causes of death among those in the most economically productive age group (15-44 years), and the second leading cause of death in the 15-19 years age group.

However, suicide is largely preventable. Unlike for many other health issues, the tools to significantly reduce the most tragic loss of life by suicide are available. With collective action to acknowledge and address this serious problem, as well as commitment to effective interventions, supported by political will and resources, preventing suicide globally is within reach.

Although suicide continues to remain a serious problem in

Suicide prevention is a collective responsibility, and must be spearheaded by governments and civil society throughout the world.



high income countries, it is the low and middle income countries that bear the larger part of the global suicide burden. Services in those countries are scarce and when they do exist, they are difficult to access and are under-resourced.

Risk factors for suicide include mental and physical

illness, alcohol or drug abuse, chronic illness, acute emotional distress, violence, a sudden and major change in an individual's life, such as loss of employment, separation from a partner, or other adverse events, or, in many cases, a combination of these factors.

While factors contributing to

suicide can vary among specific demographic and population groups, it is important to address the specific underlying causes of suicide and develop action plans to suit each country and its communities. There is a crucial need of a framework that provides the strategies needed to achieve this goal.

Importantly, it is a national suicide prevention strategy that allows communities to come together, and begin to tackle suicide and the issues specific to their needs without stigmatisation.

A national suicide prevention strategy should be developed through a stepwise approach. Such a strategy acknowledges, as a first step, that suicide is a major problem and that it is preventable.

The lack of resources — human or financial — can no longer remain an acceptable justification for not developing or implementing a national suicide prevention strategy. All should come forward to prevent suicide and the ripple effect it has on the lives of individuals, families and communities.

Source: World Health Organisation

MEDICAL ADVANCEMENT



Dengue patients at Cambodia's National Paediatric hospital.

Scientists make dengue vaccine breakthrough

Dengue is one of the most widespread mosquito-borne viral diseases in the world, with around half of the world's population are currently at risk. While infection usually causes flu-like symptoms, it can develop into a more serious form of the disease manifested by bleeding, known as severe dengue.

There is currently no vaccine to protect against dengue, and efforts to develop one have been hampered by the fact that dengue is not caused by a single virus, but rather four different related viruses (known as DENV 1, 2, 3 and 4), making development of an effective vaccine considerably more complicated than for some viral diseases.

Several possible dengue vaccine candidates are currently in development, but the new results from the very recent study shows that an effective and safe dengue vaccine may be possible. Researchers based in France and Thailand tested the effectiveness of a vaccine candidate called CYD-TDV on a group of 4002 school children in Thailand, aged from four to eleven years old. The secondary tests showed that the vaccine was effective against DENV 1, 3 and 4 (in the range of 60 to 90%), with only DENV 2 appearing to be resistant to the effects of the vaccine in this trial.

Furthermore, CYD-TDV appears to be safe and well-tolerated, with no vaccine-related serious adverse events being reported in the group who received it.

Source: The Lancet

HEALTH NEWS



On the eve of World Physiotherapy Day on September 8, Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) organised a workshop titled "Reflection of Physiotherapy Services in Bangladesh". Speakers in the workshop underscored the need of physiotherapy and urged the government to pay due attention for the welfare of the patients suffering from a varying range of disabilities.



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INTERVIEW

Providing state of the art eye care in the region

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Recently, Director of Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC) Professor Donald Tan visited Bangladesh. On his first visit to the country, he shared his views with Star Health and highlighted some latest advancement of eye care in the region, especially at his centre.

Singapore made huge advancement in cornea transplant. They also have developed a state of the art eye banks in collaboration with Sri Lanka which can meet a large portion of demand in the region.

In terms of setting up an eye bank, Prof Tan says that it is a huge effort which is time consuming at the same time. For example, Singapore needed about 10 years setting up such a centre, and Sri Lanka needed 4 years more on top of that 10 years with the experience of Singapore.

Prof Tan said that increasing public awareness for eye banking might be a potential contributor to the huge number of people waiting for cornea transplant in countries like Bangladesh.

Prof Tan said that the most important factor that contributed Sri Lanka to set up such good quality eye bank is a special form of Buddhism that promotes posthumous eye donation. They are proactive to promote tissue and organ donation in after life which make a unique difference.



Professor Donald Tan, Director - Singapore National Eye Centre

Other advancement in corneal transplant is preventing the risk of rejection. If the graft is rejected, the transplanted cornea becomes cloudy within short time, and the patient can not see again. Now there are advancement in the horizon that does not require transplantation of the whole cornea — just a partial transplantation of the particular area or layer affected serves the purpose more effectively and in sustainable way. Consequently the rejection is now much less in these cases with much better outcome.

All transplants are almost a day case procedure now. No longer general anesthesia is required — simply local anesthesia is sufficient for cornea transplant in ambulatory procedure within 20-30 min. As a result the recovery is faster within shorter hospital stay. In many cases no suture is required.

HEALTH bulletin

Sunshine vitamin may help treat tuberculosis

Vitamin D could help the body fight infections of deadly tuberculosis, according to a study in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences that showed patients recovered more quickly when given both the vitamin and antibiotics.

Fish oils help slow age decline

Moderate exercise, and a regular intake of oily fish fatty acids, keeps elderly immobility at bay, a study presented at the British Science Festival in Aberdeen.

Bad sleep may predict Alzheimer's, says study

Problems sleeping may be an early sign of Alzheimer's — a form of dementia that gradually gets worse over time, say researchers. Clumps of protein, called plaques, in the brain are thought to be a key component of the illness.



A study, published in the journal Science Translational Medicine, showed that when plaques first developed, the mice (trial on mice) started having disrupted sleep.