

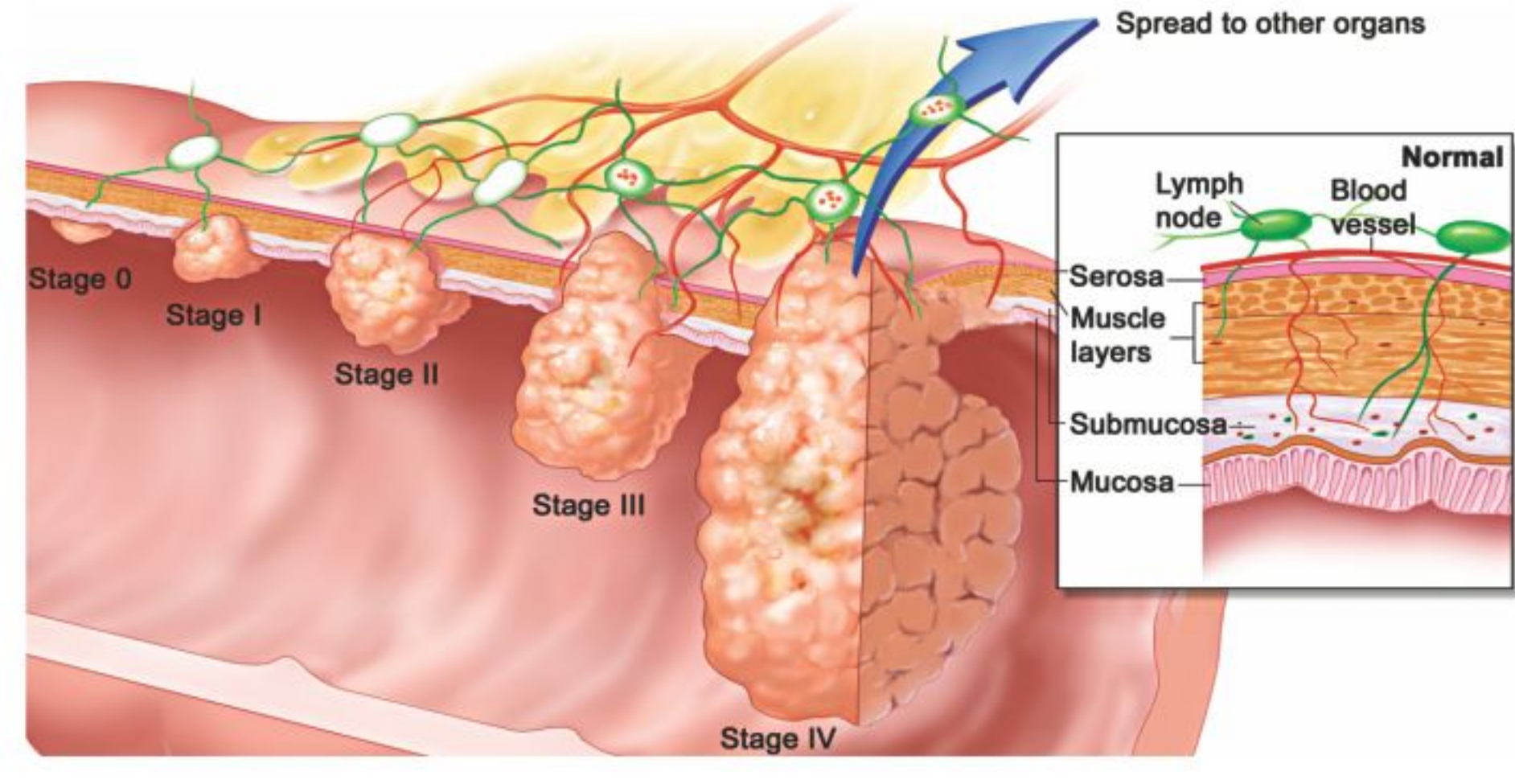
When and how to screen common cancers

STAR HEALTH DESK

Cancer is a shocking diagnosis for all of us. The shock increases manifold when someone receives a diagnosis at a very late stage — when very little can be offered for help. Most of the cancers are curable if these are detected at an earlier stage. Therefore, screening for common cancers is crucial to reduce the number of people who develop and die from cancer.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for 7.6 million deaths (around 13% of all deaths) in 2008. Cervical, breast and colon cancer are among the most common cancers that cause significant mortality and morbidity. Knowing the following timing and guideline for screening of these common cancers may help keeping cancer at bay.

Breast cancer: Breast cancer screening means checking a woman's breasts for cancer before there are signs or symptoms of the disease. According to the latest recommendation of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), a woman aged 50 to 74 years should go for



a screening every two years. If you have risk factors for breast cancer like family history, obesity, exposed to radiation, lack of exercise etc., you should consult with a doctor about when and how often you should have a screening mammogram.

Colorectal or bowel cancer: Regular screening, beginning at age 50, is the key to preventing colorectal cancer. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends screening for colorectal cancer using high-sensitivity fecal occult

blood testing at every year, sigmoidoscopy at every 5 years or colonoscopy at every 10 years beginning at age 50 years and continuing until age 75 years.

People at higher risk of developing colorectal cancer should begin screening at a younger age, and may need to be tested more frequently.

The risk factors for colon cancer are — family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps (an abnormal growth of tissue), genetic abnormality presenting

multiple polyps in the colon, lack of regular physical activity, low fruit and vegetable intake, a low-fiber and high-fat diet, overweight and obesity, alcohol consumption, tobacco use etc.

Cervical cancer: Cervical cancer which affects lower third of uterus (also called cervix) is the most common cancer in women in Bangladesh. It constitutes about one fourth of the total number of female cancer patients in Bangladesh. An estimated 13,000 approximate new cases and 6600 deaths occur every year in Bangladesh.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that all women should start screening at age 21. For women over 21, screening should be done at every three years upto 65 years who had previous normal test results.

Cervical cancer can be detected by different screening tests called Pap smear test and HPV test, Visual Inspection of Cervix with Acetic Acid (VIA). Among these methods, VIA has been introduced by the Government of Bangladesh to screen mass population due to its cost effectiveness and easy to use method.

NEW DIAGNOSTICS

Cheap colour test picks up HIV

BBC
A cheap test which could detect even low levels of viruses and some cancers has been developed by UK researchers. The colour of a liquid changes to give either a positive or negative result.



Blue for yes, red for no

The designers from Imperial College London say the device could lead to more widespread testing for HIV and other diseases in parts of the world where other methods are unaffordable.

The prototype, which needs wider testing, is described in the journal Nature Nanotechnology. The test can be configured to a unique signature of a disease or virus — such as a protein found on the surface of HIV.

If that marker is present it changes the course of a chemical reaction. The final result is blue if the marker is there, red if the marker is not.

The researchers say this allows the results to be detected with "the naked eye". The researchers expect their design will cost 10 times less than current tests. They say this will be important in countries where the only options are unaffordable.

HEALTH *bulletin*

Beans show promise in diabetes

Downing a cup of beans or lentils every day may help people with type 2 diabetes control their blood sugar and possibly reduce their risk of heart attacks and stroke, according to a small study published in Archives of Internal Medicine.

Legumes such as beans, chickpeas and lentils are already recommended for diabetics due to their low glycemic index, a measure of how far and how fast a given food sends up blood sugar. But there are few studies of their direct effects in

Smokers miss work more often, cost billions

Smokers miss an average of two or three more days of work each year than non-smokers, according to a new analysis of 29 past studies. Based on that finding, absenteeism due to smoking cost the UK alone £1.4 billion (\$2.25 billion) last year, researchers calculated.

Source: Addiction

INTERVIEW Liver transplant is now affordable

STAR HEALTH REPORT
Liver disease is fairly common in Indian sub-continent. The most common being Hepatitis C virus and Hepatitis B virus related cirrhosis. Majority of these patients are asymptomatic until they reach the end stage when they may require transplantation. There is an emerging common cause of liver disease (fatty liver disease) which is related to poor diet and obesity — which is in fact emerging globally.



Prof. Mohamed Rela

Although many patients suffering from liver disease need liver transplant, there is almost no services available for them in countries like Bangladesh. Treatment available in countries like Singapore are beyond the affordability of many of these people. There are some centres in India who provides transplant services at comparatively low cost than that of those developed countries. Global Hospitals, Chennai is one of them. They have five hospitals strategically spread across India with over 2000 beds offering multi organ transplant centers.

Prof. Mohamed Rela, who is the Head of Hepatobiliary & Liver

Transplant Surgery at Global Hospitals Group, India recently visited Bangladesh to address an esteemed gathering of Hepatologists and spread awareness of the developments in liver transplantation in the Western countries as well as in the East. It is to mention that Prof. Rela is a pioneer in paediatric liver transplant. During his visit, he shared his views with Star Health.

Children are sometimes born with liver disease. The most common cause of liver failure in children is a condition called Biliary Atresia where children are born with no bile ducts. This condition

requires immediate surgery after birth (within 8 to 12 weeks). Majority of these children require transplantation at some point of their life. Children also suffer from metabolic liver diseases which are inherited diseases.

Obviously the surgery in children are more technically challenging for some reasons, but at the same time the outcome of transplant surgery in case of children is comparatively better — Prof. Rela informed. Immunologically children are most likely to accept the transplanted organ more than that of adults.

As Prof. Rela served long time in the King's College, UK, he said, "The treatment cost in the developed countries is expensive mainly due to the cost of healthcare professionals, not because of consumable, equipment, infrastructure, medicine or something else. So, if the developing countries can offer the expertise, the cost ultimately gets lower.

Prof. Rela hopes that Bangladesh will also develop the expertise of liver transplant in course time. There will be struggle for sure, but it is not that impossible.

Tuberculosis effort in real danger

BBC
The international effort to eliminate tuberculosis is in real danger, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Its latest figures showed there were 8.7 million new cases in 2011 and 1.4 million deaths. It warned of persistently slow progress in treating tuberculosis which is resistant to antibiotics.

Expert from WHO said that more 20 million lives had been saved in the past 17 years as a result of international commitments to tackle tuberculosis. But we are now at a crossroads between TB elimination within our lifetime, and millions more TB deaths.

The WHO said there was a massive funding gap for treating the disease in low- and middle-income countries which threatens to hold back care. It said \$5bn was needed between 2013-2015, but there was a funding gap of £2bn.

The TB Alliance said: "Tuberculosis continues to kill more than 1.4 million people every year and drug-resistant TB remains one of the world's most ominous global health threats, but treatments for this disease are antiquated and inadequate.

Many researchers say that new vaccines will be the only long-term solution to tuberculosis. But it's a very complex disease and may require multiple vaccines.

A new vaccine called has been developed which has been given to nearly 3,000 babies in Africa. If it proves effective, it would be a hugely exciting result.



Knowing for better living

5 easy ways may reduce risk of diabetes by about 80%

- Take healthy diet - low in fat, sugar and salt
- Take 20-minute exercise for at least 3 days per week
- Maintain a normal body weight
- Avoid Smoking
- Avoid alcohol

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Pharma Ltd.
Dhaka, Bangladesh

www.orionpharmabd.com