

## WORLD AIDS DAY

# A world without AIDS: working to end the epidemic

### STAR HEALTH REPORT

Thirty one years ago, when HIV/AIDS was first discovered, there was very little understanding about the devastating virus. Even in past decades, thinking to end the AIDS was a dare dream.

But now, scientists have new sense of optimism. With better understanding and groundbreaking scientific research that showed tremendous potential of anti-retroviral treatment in the prevention and functional cure of HIV infection, experts believe that the end of AIDS is within our reach.

However, new financial investments and renewed commitments from countries around the world will be critical to fulfill the aspiration.

Across the globe, more than 34 million people are living with HIV and it has been responsible for the deaths of an estimated

30 million individuals. A recent report released by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) showed that the global response to the worldwide AIDS epidemic continues making remarkable progress in HIV prevention, improved treatment, and reduced AIDS-related deaths, holding out hope and possibility for the end of AIDS. The report says that a dramatic 50 percent decrease in new HIV infections across 25 low- and middle-income countries, mostly in Africa, the continent most affected by HIV.

Much of the progress is attributed to the life-saving medications, called antiretrovirals, to treat those infected with HIV. These medicines reduce the amount of virus in the blood, which increases the chance they will stay healthy and decreases the risk they can pass the virus to



someone else. It can also be used as prophylaxis for preventing HIV infection in high risk people.

In 2011, at the UN General Assembly, governments agreed to set the goal of getting 15 million HIV-infected people worldwide on the life-saving antiretroviral medicines by 2015. The latest global statistics suggest that, provided countries are able to sustain current efforts,

this target is within reach.

However, in all regions of the world, some countries and some groups of people are still not able to access HIV prevention and treatment. Children, for example, are lagging badly behind: only 28% of children who need antiretrovirals can obtain them. We need to make sure they are getting it.

To end the epidemic, we cannot do everything in every setting. Core interventions including universal access to drug, male circumcision, improve HIV testing, should be complemented, where indicated by local circumstances, by other strategies, such as condom promotion, harm reduction, behaviour change strategies, demonstration projects for pre-exposure prophylaxis, and programs to address underlying determinants of HIV risk.

In order to make sure the

progress continues and with a call for more concerted action from all countries fighting HIV, World AIDS Day is being observed today. The theme for 2011-2015 is "Getting to zero: zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS related deaths" — signifies a push towards greater access to treatment for all; a call for governments to act now.

Ending the HIV epidemic will require a global commitment of resources involving additional donor countries, strengthening health care systems overall, and fostering greater ownership by host countries of HIV/AIDS effort, including investing more in the health of their people. With collective and resolute action now and a steadfast commitment for years to come, we can create a world without AIDS for our next generation.

## NUTRITION



### Vegetables, colourful fruits key to cancer-fighting diet

Many cancer-fighting fruits and vegetables are at their nutritional peak in the fall, and it is a good time to incorporate them into your diet, according to nutritional experts from Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

For example, research suggests that eating an apple a day really may keep the doctor away, by helping to prevent throat, mouth, lung and possibly breast cancer. Apples contain a nutrient called quercetin, which protects the cell's DNA from damage that could lead to cancer. The key is to eat them raw and with the skin on where many of the nutrients are found.

Cranberries, another healthy fall favorite, are in season and at their nutritional peak now. There is evidence that the benzoic acid found in these berries may inhibit lung and colon cancer, and some forms of leukemia.

Brightly colored fresh vegetables that are available at this time of year are beets, carrots and parsnips should be taken daily. The brighter and richer the pigment, the higher the level of cancer-fighting nutrients.

Dark, leafy vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, tomato are also important. People who eat plenty of these vegetables have lower rates of lung, prostate and stomach cancer.

Colour is key to finding cancer-fighting foods in any season. Eating a plant-based diet is the best way to help lower your risk of cancer all year long.



### When pregnant women lack vitamin C, their babies pay the price

Vitamin C deficiency in the mother during pregnancy can have serious consequences for their unborn babies brain. And once brain damage has occurred, it cannot be reversed by vitamin C supplements after birth. This is shown through new research at the University of Copenhagen published in the scientific journal PLOS ONE.

### Autism: Traffic pollution linked, study suggests

The possibility that autism is linked to traffic pollution has been raised by a new study published in the Archives of General Psychiatry journal. Researchers said that those exposed to high levels of pollution were three times more likely to have autism than children who grew up with cleaner air.

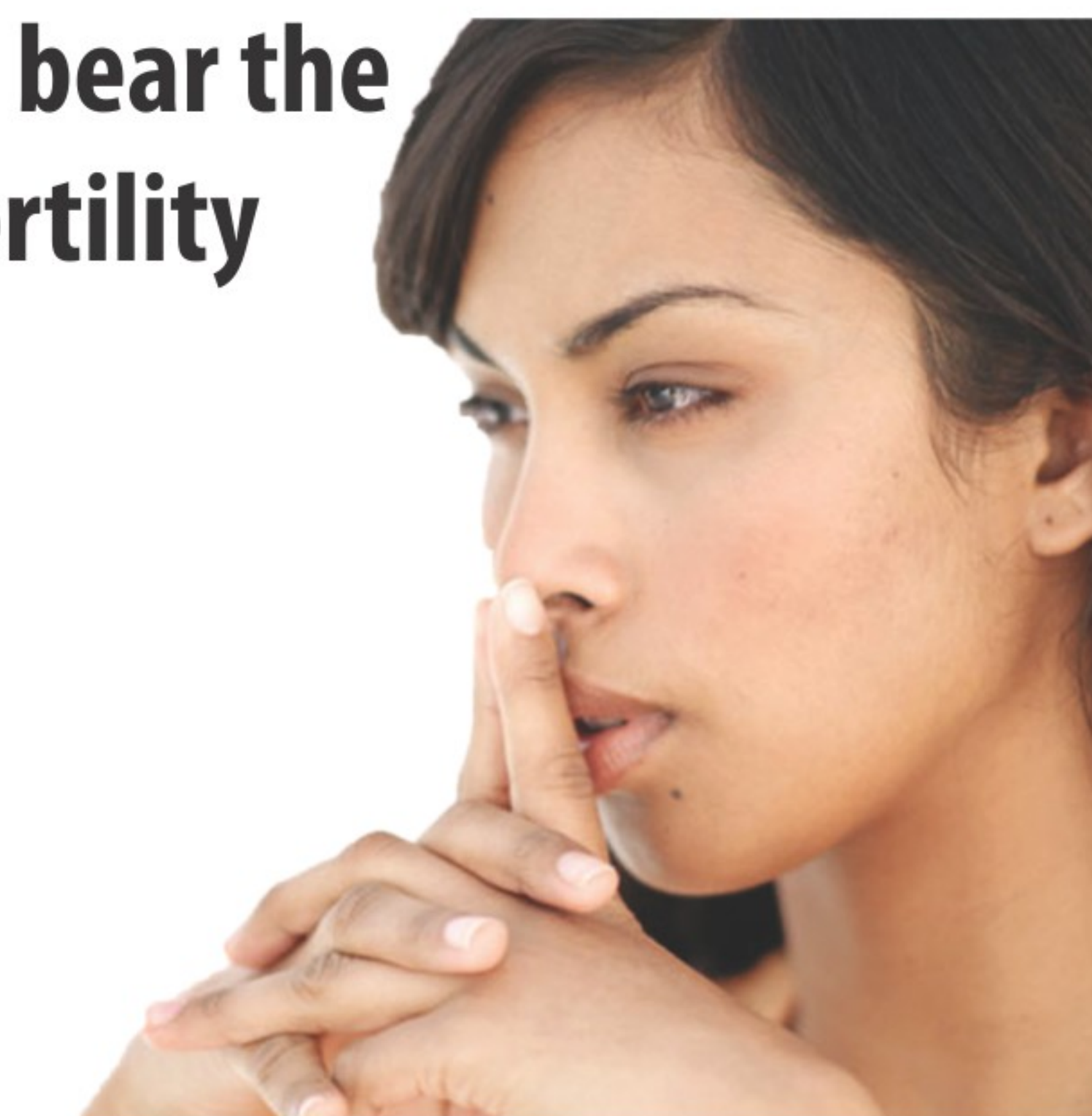
## Only women bear the brunt of infertility

SHAMEEM AKHTAR

When a couple cannot have children, the woman is usually blamed in Bangladesh. In our society, only woman is being generally considered responsible for child bearing and bears the brunt of being infertile irrespective of with whom the cause of infertility lies.

When women do not conceive, they get insulted from family and also are under immense pressure to seek medical help without considering the need of investigation of their male counterpart. Infertile women often receive disrespectful treatment by husbands, and the husbands' families may encourage them to divorce or take a second wife. In more extreme cases, acts of violence are committed against them.

Recently Bangladesh Institute of Research for Promotion of Essential & Reproductive Health and Technologies (BIRPERHT) conducted study to assess the situation and treatment of the infertile couples in Bangladesh shows that majority women of the study received care from traditional healer then male due to maintain happiness in the family to protect family from familial conflict.



It is estimated that worldwide about 5% of infertile couples are infertile due to anatomical, genetic, endocrinological or immunological factors. The remainder suffers from involuntary infertility related to preventable conditions including: sexually transmitted, infectious and parasitic diseases; iatrogenic health care practices; exposure to potentially toxic substances in the diet or environment; and medical neglect of precursor conditions.

Successful programmes should be implemented about infertility for treatment at community level

and community-based interventions to demystify the causes of infertility, so that people as well as infertile couples, know why infertility occurs in both men and women and where best to seek care. People and infertile couples in particular, should be provided with appropriate information regarding the causes of infertility that either of the partners could be responsible and it is important to investigate both.

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## Internet addiction can cause physical damage to the brain — just like drugs

Internet addiction disrupts nerve wiring in the brains of teenagers, a study published in PLoS ONE has found — causing a level of brain damage normally seen in heavy substance abusers. Similar effects have been seen in the brains of people exposed to alcohol, cocaine and cannabis.

The discovery shows that being hooked on a behaviour can be just as physically damaging as addiction to drugs, scientists believe.



/StarHealthBD

## Knowing for better living

### In Bangladesh . . .

Cancer is the leading cause of death among women of **15-49** years of age !

Take healthy diet

Exercise regularly

Maintain healthy weight

Avoid smoking & exposure to smoke

Get regular health check-up

Consult with doctor before taking any birth control pill



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