

DEPRESSION

Treatment brings smile back in life

DR NAFIA FARZANA

No one is happy in all occasion, but some people feel as if they can never be contented. They lead awful life with a depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, decreased energy, low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite and poor concentration. These people suffers from depression that significantly destroys their quality of life — the ability to work, maintaining relationships and at worst, can lead to suicide.

According to the World Federation for Mental Health, depression is estimated to affect 350 million people worldwide and one of the leading causes of disability. However, it is often under-recognised and under-treated in developing countries like Bangladesh.

Depression can affect anyone and often co-exist with other serious illnesses. However, common feeling of sadness due to any situational factor for a transient period is not depression.

Many people in Bangladesh are hardly aware of psychological expression of depression like low mood, lack of drive and hopelessness. Hence, they rarely seek treatment for depression.

There are some biological symptoms associated with depression: like change



in appetite as a result weight gain or weight loss, constipation, loss of interest in sexual interact, paused menstrual cycle for certain period of time (in female), sexual dysfunction (in male) may occur.

These symptoms need to be addressed. Prolong uses of steroids, many anti hypertensive drugs, anti cancer drugs and drugs used for the treatment of arthritis causes depression as their side effects.

The stigma of mental illness is perhaps the biggest challenge to confront in

developing countries. Stigma and ignorance causes many people to delay seeking care and treatment.

Proper management of depression will help anyone to get back to normal life but undiagnosed depression worsens health risk

status. It is a factor for suicide and often worsens the outcome of other

health problems like diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, thyroid disease or any other medical condition.

Drugs that induce depression as a side effect should be used cautiously and patients who are on these drugs need periodic psychiatric assessment to exclude depression. Seeking assistance with depression is most crucial and obviously there is no shame seeking help.

There is cost-effective treatment available to improve the health of millions suffering from depression and it can be delivered at primary care setting. Treatment consisting of drugs and psychotherapy helps to increase one's coping ability, rational thinking thus reduces vulnerability to develop further depressive episode.

Many renowned personalities and leaders suffer from depression but they are maintaining quality life dedicating themselves for entertainment and greater benefit of humanity. We need to raise awareness and educate people about depression at all level and help them get treated and bring their smile back.

The writer is a Medical Officer working in the Dept. of Psychiatry, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU). E-mail: nafiafarzana@hotmail.com

BRACHYTHERAPY

An innovation for treating prostate cancer

DR JOHN YUEN

Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting men. Nowadays, men harbouring prostate cancer are usually well and without any symptoms. They often have the disease detected early, when it can be cured.

There is convincing evidence to suggest that men with early stage of prostate cancer, in particular low-risk prostate cancer do not enjoy much survival advantage after radical surgery. But an advanced minor outpatient surgical procedure called brachytherapy has emerged as an effective and curative option now-a-days and getting popular by and by.

Brachytherapy is a procedure that involves placing of small radioactive seeds in the prostate gland that releases radiation from inside the body to kill cancer cells unlike traditional radiation from outside.

Emerging data have shown that it is more effective and less hazardous in comparison to conventional radiation therapy and radical surgery. It is much safer and better option when it comes to post-treatment quality of life outcomes. For patients who wish to be cured of the disease, brachytherapy by may represent an attractive treatment option which delivers the best chance of eliminating the cancer while preserving pre-treatment quality of life, in particular the preservation of urinary continence and sexual function.

Brachytherapy by seed implant is probably the most effective form of treatment for patients with low-risk early stage prostate cancer as it renders cure while preserving the quality of life. However, like every other procedure, patients should take certain precaution after implantation for safety.

If you are diagnosed with prostate cancer at early stage, discuss your doctor about this most exiting and effective option.

The writer is a Senior Consultant Urologist, Department of Urology, Singapore General Hospital, Singapore. Email: john.yuen.s.p@sgh.com.sg

18th Diabetes and Endocrine Conference held



With a view to discuss about the latest innovation and guidelines in diabetic care in Bangladesh, 18th Diabetes and Endocrine Conference 2012 was held in Dhaka recently. Renowned diabetes specialists from home and abroad, researchers, leaders in diabetes care and young physicians congregated in the conference jointly organised by Bangladesh Endocrine Society and Diabetic Association of Bangladesh.

/StarHealthBD

Winter wellness: Myth and truth

STAR HEALTH DESK

There are many myths persist about what problems can arise to our health during winter season. But most of them are not true scientifically. It is important to distinguish truth from myth, in order to reduce your winter risk by understanding some common myths — and the actual truth behind them.

Myth: Bundle up or you will catch a cold.

Truth: Being in the cold has nothing to do with getting a cold. The thing to remember is that viruses cause colds, not the weather. Cold viruses are passed from person to person, not through shivering temperatures. In fact, the reason colds spread faster in winter is because people are more likely to be inside within close proximity to each other.

Myth: You should not exercise in the cold.

Truth: It is absolutely fine to exercise in the cold, just make sure you warm up first. That may mean walking a bit before starting on a vigorous run, or avoiding a big hill until you are acclimated to the temperature. Sudden physical exertion in cold weather can, at times, be a risk for cardiovascular strain.

Myth: I do not need sunscreen during the winter.

Truth: The sun is lower in the sky in winter, but that does not mean you do not need to protect your skin. Even if you can not see the sun, it is still there. More importantly, its UV rays are still there as well. If you are going to be outside for a long amount of time, you need to wear sunscreen to protect your skin.

Myth: You can not get allergies in the winter months.

Truth: In the winter, there is good and bad news for allergy sufferers. If you have pollen allergies, they will be better in the winter, but if you are sensitive to indoor allergens, such as pet dander or dust mites, your allergies may be even worse. So although your sneezing and sniffling may not be from seasonal culprits, your indoor allergies could be more bothersome than usual.

Myth: Hot meals will keep you healthier than cold meals.

Truth: Most foods are better for us in their natural state. Once food is heated it begins to lose some nutrients. Hot foods are often comfort foods, and may make us feel better about the cold weather.

Knowing for better living

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

In Bangladesh . . .

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



In Search of Excellence

www.orionpharmabd.com

ORION
Pharma Ltd.
Dhaka, Bangladesh