

Health informatics: not an option but an imperative

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Health Informatics (HI) is the use of information technology for solving many types of healthcare knowledge and practice related challenges to benefit all the stakeholders in health. In most of the developed countries of the world, HI is transforming the science and delivery of healthcare while improving clinical and socio-economic outcomes. This paradigm shift in medicine is radically changing how medicine is practiced and will continue to disseminate into all the countries in the world.

HI is multidisciplinary and involves the use of information science, computer science and technology, decision science, cognitive psychology, statistics, management science, business

and economics, communication technologies, sociology, politics, law etc. Incorporation of information technology (IT) innovations in healthcare planning and delivery to take healthcare to visionary level is more commonly known as 'eHealth' — a transformative paradigm. With the advent of portable and intelligent electronic health records, telemedicine and mHealth capabilities, transformed traditional care and remote care are becoming the standard of care globally and especially in developed countries.

In a country like Bangladesh, the demand of healthcare is huge in comparison to the big number of population and insufficient healthcare providers. We need to embark on the eHealth



journey, not only for individual health benefits but also for societal and national wellbeing. eHealth innovations enable access, quality and management of health information by the stake-

holders in the most actionable form, how, when and where they need it. Information has been with us since the dawn of civilisation, but informatics has taken it to revolutionary levels in all spheres of health

management.

The role of properly designed Healthcare Information and Communication Technology (HICT) and eHealth environment that is sensitive to the population, culture and economics, to reduce morbidity, mortality and healthcare expenses cannot be overemphasised. eHealth and its adoption are not without challenges, however, can be very rewarding when developed and implemented in a befitting manner.

Given the context in Bangladesh, it is not an option but an imperative to improve clinical, financial, societal and national outcomes in healthcare.

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WORLD MALARIA DAY



Invest in the future, defeat malaria

Over the last decade, the world has made major progress in the fight against malaria. Since 2000, malaria mortality rates have fallen by more than 25%, and 50 of the 99 countries with ongoing transmission are now on track to meet the 2015 World Health Assembly target of reducing incidence rates by more than 75%.

But we are not there yet. Malaria still kills an estimated 6,60,000 people worldwide. Every year, more than 200 million cases occur; most of these cases are never tested or registered. A recent plateauing of international funding has slowed down progress, and emerging drug and insecticide resistance threaten to reverse recent gains.

If the world is to maintain and accelerate progress against malaria, in line with MDG 6, and to ensure attainment of MDGs 4 and 5, more funds are urgently required.

With the theme "Invest in the future-defeat malaria", the day was observed on April 25 with campaign aiming to strengthen the political will across the world and help contribute to increase the funding needed to control malaria in endemic countries.

HEALTH *bulletin*



Smokers have worse prognosis of colon cancer

Smokers are less likely to be alive and cancer-free three years after having surgery for colon cancer than people who have never smoked, according to a new study published in Journal of Clinical Oncology.



Playing Tetris video game fixes lazy eye, doctors say

Canadian doctors from The McGill University say they have found an inventive way to treat lazy eye — playing the Tetris video game. The team discovered that it worked better than conventional patching of the good eye to make the weak one work harder.

Handling medical crisis at disaster like Savar

PROF M KARIM KHAN

Collapse of a building at Savar, an industrial area of Bangladesh is country's one of the worst disasters. In addition to death, a large number of survivors are suffering from severe trauma/injuries and many who are trapped inside the collapsed complex are crying out from the rubbles having lack of lifesaving oxygen, food or water.

For those who survived with injuries, prompt medical attention is crucial to gain functional recovery. Even the minor injuries or fractures can become life-threatening because they are left

open to some dangerous bacterial infections such as Tetanus.

Managing such disaster needs certain skill and preparedness, prompt response in order to lessen the impact of disasters. For any disaster, preparedness is very important and mandatory to combat the disaster but unfortunately we are not aware of it.

The authority, doctors, nurse, paramedics, medical students in Enam Medical College and Hospital at Savar are trying to handle the disaster. The first and foremost thing is not to be panicked or not to create panic. We should help to rescue the victims and send

him/her to a nearer hospital or safer place as soon as possible. Initial assessment and intervention can save the injured from life threatening complications. We should sort out the victims who need immediate life support and arrange accordingly.

Oxygen, blood transfusion, intravenous fluids, pain killer injections, tablets, anti tetanus injection and antibiotics are the mainstay medicine for initial stabilisation of the survivors.

If there is fracture in any limb, stabilise the fracture part by cast, plaster or by any means that support and immobilise the broken part. If there is any bleeding, try to compress the bleeding point. If there is head injury, chest injury with respiratory distress, specialised support need to be arranged for them.

Bangladesh is at risk for earthquake and other natural calamities like flood, tornado but preparedness for managing any disaster is very little. Concerned authority should take urgent initiative to serve immediate health needs in crisis with rapid and coordinating life-saving care.

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

HEALTH TIPS

Don't ignore pain during exercise

It is important to challenge yourself during exercise. But you should never ignore pain — a sign that you are potentially stressing or damaging your joints. The Cleveland Clinic offers this advice for people who exercise to strengthen the back:

- Don't jump rope, which can cause too much stress on the spinal disks.
- Running is fine, as long as you are not in pain.
- Wear sturdy, supportive shoes or sneakers while walking or running. Avoid uneven surfaces.
- Stop exercising if you feel back pain that is worsening or spreading into the legs.
- Work with a physician or physical therapist if you have pain during exercise or activity.
- Pay attention to your body's warning signs that you are pushing yourself too hard.



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Knowing for better living

In Bangladesh . . .

. . . **26.3%** people are suffering from musculoskeletal pain

Avoid heavy physical activity

Use firm mattress while sleeping

Keep your back straight while sitting

Avoid standing at same position for a long time

Avoid smoking

Consult your doctor



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