

Saving lives on the road

More than 2,70,000 pedestrians lose their lives on the world's roads each year accounting for 22% of the total 1.24 million road traffic deaths. World Health Organisation (WHO) is calling on governments to take concrete actions to improve the safety of pedestrians.

Under the banner "Make Walking Safe", the Second United Nations Global Road Safety Week (6-12 May) has kicked off worldwide. With events registered in nearly 70 countries, the Week seeks to draw attention to the needs of pedestrians; generate action on measures to protect them; and contribute to achieving the goal of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 to save 5 million lives. The week is an opportunity to highlight the myriad challenges that pedestrians face around the world each and every day.

Pedestrians are among the most vulnerable road users. Studies indicate that males, both children and adults, make up a high proportion of pedestrian deaths and injuries. In developed countries, older pedestrians are more at risk, while in low-income and middle-income countries, children and young adults are often affected.



About 1.24 million road traffic deaths occur annually on the world's roads, making road traffic injuries the eighth leading cause of death globally, and the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-29 years.

WHO supports road safety efforts generally by providing guidance to countries on five key risk factors: speeding,

drinking and driving, and failing to use motorcycle helmets, seat-belts and child restraints; assisting efforts to improve data collection and trauma care; monitoring progress through global status reports; and serving as the secretariat for the Decade of Action.

There are many steps which can be taken to protect pedestrians on the

roads. The newly released Pedestrian safety: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners, produced by WHO and partners, promotes a focus on combined enforcement, engineering and education measures, which include among others:

- Adopting and enforcing new and existing laws to reduce speeding, curb drinking and driving, decrease mobile phone use and other forms of distracted driving.
- Putting in place infrastructure which separates pedestrians from other traffic (sidewalks, raised crosswalks, overpasses, underpasses, refuge islands and raised medians), lowers vehicle speeds (speed bumps, rumble strips and chicanes) and improves roadway lighting.
- Creating pedestrian zones in city centres by restricting vehicular access.
- Improving mass transit route design.
- Developing and enforcing vehicle design standards for pedestrian protection, including soft vehicle fronts.
- Organising and/or further enhancing trauma care systems to guarantee the prompt treatment of those with life-threatening injuries.

Source: World Health Organisation

NEWBORN MORTALITY

Significant drop in newborn mortality in Bangladesh

49% drop since 1990, still about 28,000 babies die within the first day of life

STAR HEALTH REPORT

State of the World's Mothers 2013 recently released by Save the Children reveals that Bangladesh has made a commendable success in reducing newborn mortality with a 49% drop in between 1990 and 2011.

Bangladesh ranked 136th on the best places to be a mother, based on mothers' health, education and economic status, as well as critical child indicators such as health and nutrition. The report that compares 176 countries shows that Bangladesh is in ahead of neighbouring India and Pakistan but trailed behind Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Though significant progress, still there is about 28,000 Bangladeshi babies die within the first day of life, accounting for one-third of all newborn deaths.

Michael Foley, Health and Nutrition Director for Save the Children in Bangladesh stated that the successful projects in Bangladesh should be scaled up to prevent more babies from dying needlessly. More health workers have to be recruited, trained and sent to door-to-door to teach families about nutrition, family planning, pre-natal care and essential newborn care.

HEALTH bulletin

Fluids may prevent constipation better than fiber

Everyone knows that getting enough fiber is a secret to staying regular, but a large new study published in American Journal of Gastroenterology finds that people who got plenty of fluids were the least likely to suffer constipation.

Exercise may lower older women's risk for kidney stones

Anybody who's ever had kidney stones knows how painful they can be. Now, a new study published in American Urological Association suggests that getting more exercise may reduce older women's risk for kidney stones.

For pregnant smokers, vitamin C might help babies' lungs

Vitamin C may help prevent lung problems in babies born to mothers who smoke during pregnancy, according to a new study published in American Academy of Paediatrics.



Rehabilitation for Savar survivors

DR MOHAMMAD ALI

The collapse of building at Savar that killed several hundred workers and left several thousands injured is the worst industrial disaster in Bangladesh. Many of those who survived have lost their limbs, many have become paralysed. Ironically, all those people are in their productive age and most of them are the only earning member of their family. With disability and deformity, it has become extremely difficult for them to get back to work again. But with long term rehabilitation support, they can lead a better life with acquiring productivity and mobility.

The rehabilitation process varies according to the nature of injury. Some of them have lost both legs, either hand or one leg and/hand. So, the rehabilitation programme should be individualised. The core team should include orthopaedic surgeon, physical therapist and occupational and vocational trainer.

The large numbers of people who sustain limb amputations are in need of prosthetic devices and should be aware of rehabilitation techniques. We should start preparation for artificial limb or prosthesis now.

Post-operative management should be aimed at controlling pain and protection of the residual limb from trauma, swelling and other complications and make it fit for prosthesis.

To prevent contractures, joints must be moved through the full



range of motion either actively or passively three times, at least twice a day. Attention must be directed toward preventing bed sore formation by changing position at regular interval. Emotional support and reassurance should be given to allow the patient to accept the loss.

Early prosthetic fitting, before the wound is completely healed is common in the management of the traumatic amputee. It has been shown that early fitting and mobilisation of the lower limb amputee has the advantage of decreasing the risk of muscle atrophy and joint contracture.

The amputee should be trained to use the prosthesis, how to care for the residual limb and maintain the prosthetic device. The amputee should

also need to learn to recognise problems with the fit of the prosthesis and how to make adjustments.

Finally, rehabilitation should be completed with vocational rehabilitation where there will be functional improvement and commencement the productive life.

We have to ensure that the injured people can receive immediate and long term rehabilitative care. Ironically, we do not have any public full fledged and independent rehabilitation centre to provide such large scale care. It is high time to establish this care facility to tackle any future disaster.

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HEALTH TIPS

Recognise early signs of Autism

Symptoms of autism can be difficult to recognise in very young children, especially in mild cases or in instances when a child has other mental or physical conditions. The U.S. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke mentions these possible early symptoms of autism:

- No pointing or babbling by age 1, or the absence of saying single words by age 16 months.
- No response to calling the child's name.
- Lack of early social or language skills.
- No eye contact with others.
- Obsessive organising or lining up of objects.
- Not smiling.



/StarHealthBD

Knowing for better living

The recommended daily dietary fiber intake for an adult is 20-30 grams

Why we need fiber

- Ensures good digestive health
- Helps to prevent constipation
- Helps to lower blood cholesterol and glucose level
- Helps to lose weight

Fiber rich foods

- Brown rice
- Wheat flour
- Pulses
- Vegetables
- Ispaghula husk
- Fruits



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