

A united call to invest in girls and women

DR TAREQ SALAHUDDIN, back from Kuala Lumpur

Recently more than 4,500 global leaders and advocates representing over 2,200 organisations from 149 countries gathered for Women Deliver 2013 — the largest conference of the decade focused on the health and wellbeing of girls and women. The conference was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from May 28-30, 2013.

The opening sessions of this three-day event highlighted the critical need to invest in girls and women to spur development worldwide with the welcoming remarks from Malaysian Prime Minister Honorable Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak.

The World Bank and the Guttacher Institute quantified the economic and social benefits of investing in girls and women. Their new research made clear that gender inequality and gaps in reproductive and maternal health hinder global development.

The World Bank report demonstrates that addressing the reproductive health needs of women is critical to achieving gender equality and improved development outcomes.

The Guttacher Institute report provides new regional data on the unmet need for maternal and newborn care. Although there have been improvements in access to medical care during pregnancy and delivery, tens of millions of women and newborns in developing countries still do not receive the care they need. Each year, an estimated 287,000 women worldwide die from pregnancy-related causes, and approxi-

WHAT IF WE DOUBLED OUR INVESTMENT IN FAMILY PLANNING?



mately three million newborns do not survive past the first 28 days of life. The report finds that additional investments in reproductive and maternal health would generate immediate returns in terms of reducing disability among women and newborns, and saving lives.

The global leaders called for accelerated progress on family planning at Women Deliver 2013. They announced new commitments toward expanding contraceptive access for women in developing countries. They also outlined plans for sustaining this momentum in the years to come.

"Putting women at the center of development and delivering solutions that meet their needs will result in huge improvements in health, prosperity and quality of life," said Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Co-Chair Melinda Gates.

The global leaders addressed the importance of placing girls and women at the center of the next development agenda, and discussed advocacy strategies to keep girls' and women's needs in focus.

In her remarks, UNDP Administrator Helen Clark called for a global development agenda "which gives priority to gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women to make their own decisions about the lives they lead."

Women Deliver 2013 concluded with a united call to invest in girls and women. World leaders and advocates demanded girls and women are prioritised in lead-up to 2015 MDG deadline and beyond.

E-mail: tareq.salahuddin@thedailystar.net

IODINE DEFICIENCY



Iodised salt is a good source to replenish its deficiency by dietary intake. A large UK study finds that iodine deficiency during pregnancy may adversely affect children's mental development.

Low Iodine affects mental growth

STAR HEALTH REPORT

A study of around 1,000 UK mothers and their children has revealed that iodine deficiency in pregnancy may have an adverse effect on children's mental development. The research published raises concerns that the iodine status of pregnant women is a public health issue that needs to be addressed.

Iodine — which is consumed mainly via dairy products, fortified salt and seafood — is essential for producing the hormones made by the thyroid gland, which have a direct effect on fetal brain development.

The results of the study clearly show the importance of adequate iodine status during early pregnancy, and emphasise the risk that iodine deficiency can pose to the developing infant, even in a country classified as only mildly iodine deficient.

Researchers recommended that pregnant women and those planning a pregnancy should ensure adequate iodine intake especially from good dietary sources including milk, dairy products and fish.

HEALTH bulletin



High doses of common painkillers may raise risk for heart trouble

People who take high doses of common painkillers known as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) face a greater risk for heart problems, says a new study. The review of nearly 650 randomised trials found that taking either 2,400 mg of Ibuprofen or 150 mg of Diclofenac daily increased the risk of heart attacks, strokes and death by about one-third. The findings were published in The Lancet.

Sugar water injections may help ease knee pain

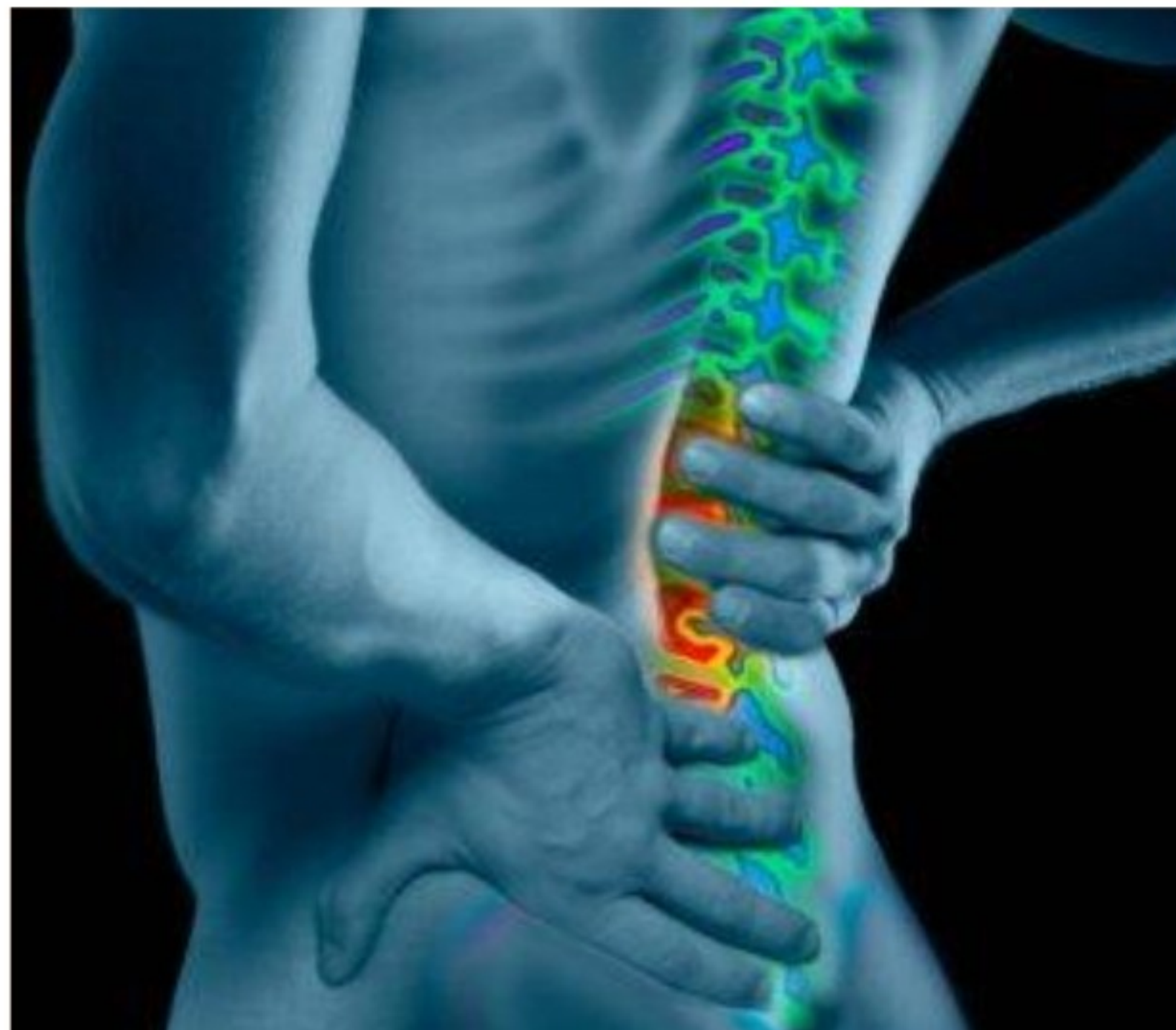
Knee pain appears to decrease up to one year after prolotherapy—a series of sugar water injections at the site of the pain, according to a new study published in Annals of Family Medicine.

Physiotherapy, key option for back pain

DR ALTAF HOSSAIN SARKER

Pain in the lower back commonly known as low back pain can range from mild, dull, annoying pain to persistent, severe and disabling one. Back pain can restrict mobility and interfere with normal functioning. However, with proper physiotherapy which is now considered as a key option for treating such pain, one can manage the condition better.

About 80% of the adult people suffering from back pain at some time in their life time. According to the spine specialist and spine Institute of the world eight million people are totally disable from back pain, second leading cause for physician visits and fifth most common reason for hospitalisation. So, almost every family has one or more member who has been suffering from back pain.



The source of pain is in the spine or supporting structure with mechanical or non cause in 70% cases. Some of other causes are disc prolapsed, osteoporosis (bone becomes porous and fragile), fracture, spinal canal narrowing etc.

Risk factors of low back pain include-work related factor's, pregnancy, poor posture, age, weak trunk muscles, stress, depression, continuous work, fitness, genetic factor, repetitive movements, congenital spinal problems, prolong use of steroids injury to the back in past, smoking, alcohol.

Managing this condition with physiotherapy should be started after consulting a specialist physiotherapist. It is essential to examine the patient properly and explore the source before starting physiotherapy.

Proper exercise with light activity speeds up healing and recovery. Remember, your disc lives on movement.

Law back pain can be prevented easily. Correct back care plays a great role to prevent back pain. Make sure you do the regular correct exercise and always bend on your knee and hip, but not on your back during picking and lifting object. Drinking plenty of water and reducing stress is also helpful.

The writer is the a Physiotherapist at Laser Physiotherapy Center, Dhaka.

Health Tips

Be alert for signs of preeclampsia

STAR HEALTH DESK

Preeclampsia occurs when there is a swift and significant spike in blood pressure during pregnancy. It can be dangerous for both the pregnant woman and the unborn baby. The affected pregnant women may have these typical symptoms of preeclampsia:

- High blood pressure.
- Swollen hands and face.
- High levels of protein in the urine.
- Stomach pain.
- Blurry vision and/or dizziness.
- Frequent headaches.

Seminar on multidisciplinary cancer treatment held



With a view to discuss novel methods of treating cancer, a seminar entitled "The new concept of cancer treatment" was organised recently by Dhaka office of Guangzhou Modern Cancer Hospital, China. Experts from Bangladesh and China along with a group of interested audience took part in the interactive seminar.



/StarHealthBD

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



In Search of Excellence

www.orionpharmabd.com

ORION
Pharma Ltd.
Dhaka, Bangladesh