

Preventing blindness from Diabetes

STAR HEALTH DESK

Diabetes mellitus is a global epidemic that currently affects 366 million people and the number is expected to increase by 54% to 552 million in 2030. Like its damaging effect on heart, kidney, blood vessel, it increases the risk of a range of eye diseases most notably Diabetic Retinopathy (DR). DR damages blood vessels inside the retina at the back of the eye. It commonly affects both eyes and can lead to vision loss if it is not treated. Poorly controlled blood sugars, high blood pressure and high cholesterol increase the risk of developing DR.

Every person with diabetes is at risk of developing DR. More than 75% of people who have diabetes for more than 20 years will have some form of DR. While DR is not currently the primary cause of avoidable blindness, it has the capacity to become the leading cause of blindness in the next 20 years and it will affect the poorest people most — already 80% of people with diabetes live in low-middle income countries.

People with DR whose sight is at risk can be treated, most commonly with laser, to prevent visual impairment and blindness. However, there is no treatment that can restore vision that has already been lost. Because DR is initially asymptomatic many people with diabetes are not aware that their condition, if left unmanaged it



may affect their vision and lead to blindness. The vast majority of patients who develop DR have no symptoms until the very late stages (by which time it may be too late for effective treatment). Therefore

screening and early intervention is critical. Targeting resources to the 'front end' of the service delivery system over time will help reduce the burden on tertiary services, which are expensive, resource-intensive

and often simply unavailable.

There is good evidence, however, that making appropriate lifestyle changes can contain or even reverse the most common form of the disease. The relevant lifestyle changes involve a sensible lower carbohydrate diet, increased exercise plus control of blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol. This is the main primary health care approach that can result in lowering the incidence and ultimately the prevalence of diabetes — but community buy-in is critically important.

Due to the prolific increase in diabetes, based on current estimates, a minimum of 3 million eyes will need to be evaluated each day by 2030 (35 exams per second). Despite a 54% increase in the diabetes population there will be less than a 2% growth in the number of ophthalmologists by 2030. The limited availability of a trained workforce at all levels limits service quality and reach.

Fortunately, because of the ten to twenty year delay in the onset of DR, we still have a small window of opportunity to put systems, equipment and people in place now to cope with, and wherever possible prevent, the epidemic of DR that is likely to affect the poorest countries a decade or so from now.

Source: The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and The Fred Hollows Foundation (FHF)

HOPE IN HEALTH

Japanese encephalitis vaccine developed

A newly accessible vaccine against Japanese encephalitis is going to make the protection of more children in developing countries easier. The vaccine, manufactured in China, only needs to be given in one dose, it can be used for infants, and it is less expensive than other Japanese encephalitis vaccines.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recently added the vaccine to its list of prequalified medicines, meaning that WHO has given the vaccine its stamp of approval in safety and efficacy terms.

Japanese encephalitis, a mosquito-borne flavivirus infection is a severe disease that involves inflammation of the brain. The disease is preventable by proven effective vaccines.

Novo Nordisk to invest up to \$3.7b on diabetes pills

The Danish company said it planned to spend the money through to 2020 on six diabetes pills it has under development and that the sum included potential production facilities, reports Reuters.

In the conventional treatment, insulin has to be injected to the patients, something that scares off many potential users in the early stages of diabetes. The challenge for the tablet technology is to get the insulin through gastric acid and into the bloodstream.

Novo Nordisk, the world's largest insulin producer, aims to develop both an insulin and a so-called GLP-1 agonist in tablet form. It will spend around 1 billion crowns on the projects this year, with investment increasing towards possible product launches early next decade.

HEALTHbulletin



Sunscreen shields important anti-cancer gene

Researchers who conducted the world's first study to assess the molecular impact of sunscreen found it offers 100% protection against all three types of skin cancer — basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and malignant melanoma. In the study published in the journal Pigment Cell & Melanoma Research, researchers found sunscreen prevents damage to a key anti-cancer gene known as p53.

There is lots of evidence that sunscreen stops skin from getting sunburn, but not much is known — although there is much speculation — about whether it can prevent skin cancers.

Citrus fruits may prevent kidney cysts

Scientists have discovered that a component found in grapefruit and other citrus fruits may successfully block the development of kidney cysts, according to a study published in the British Journal of Pharmacology.

Steroid fed meat of animals — how far safe?

PROF DR M KARIM KHAN

It is only a week ahead of Eid-ul-Adha. Thousands of animals will be sacrificed for Qurbani. Recently we have watched in different news media that the animals that we are going to sacrifice in coming Eid are given steroid in their food to make them fatty. Now questions arises whether consumption of meat of these animal are safe or not?

From literature, it reveals that in USA, steroid and hormones are being used to make cows fatty and healthy since long time. But they use it in a measured way and cautiously under supervision of animal physicians. On the other hand European countries, does not use steroid considering their meat may be harmful.

Researchers says that occasional consumption of meat of animals, fed on steroid are not harmful for health. But those pregnant women who consumes such beef three days in a week may cause some harm to their babies in the womb, especially

if it is male.

Studies say that these male babies in future may suffer from infertility or sub fertility. This research findings are from USA, not from Bangladesh. Time has come to do research on this issue in our country to confirm

the side effects of consuming meat of such beef as we consume them routinely during Eid occasions.

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Myth and fact of hospice and palliative care

Myth: Having palliative care means one will die soon.
Fact: Hospice and palliative care is not for the end of life. It is a holistic approach that includes caregiver support, spiritual care, bereavement and much more.

Myth: Palliative care is just for patients with cancers.
Fact: All those who are diagnosed with a chronic life-limiting

illness can benefit from hospice and palliative care.

Myth: Palliative care only manages pain through the use of addictive narcotics.
Fact: Palliative care is the personal care that provides psycho-social and spiritual care along with pain and symptom management.

HEALTH NEWS



PHOTO: COURTESY

Centre for Palliative Care (CPC) of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University observed World Palliative Care Day 2013 yesterday.

World Palliative Care Day 2013 observed

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Although we have made some progress in initiating palliative care, the concept of total care for incurably ill patients and their families, there are still millions of people around the world who do not have proper care.

The Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance (WPCA) and its global partners are focusing on "Dispelling the myths" on the eve of World Hospice and Palliative Care 2013 for creating awareness and encouraging people to promote the facts about hospice and palliative care.

In addition to better integration of hospice and palliative care into healthcare, the global hospice and palliative care community underscores the need for:

- More training for health professionals and carers
- Improved access to pain and symptom management medications
- The inclusion of hospice and palliative care into existing health policies
- Opportunities for older people to be involved in decisions around their care



/StarHealthBD

Knowing for better living

Inappropriate use of **antibiotic** leads to antibiotic resistance !

Take antibiotic on Doctor's prescription

Complete the duration of antibiotic treatment even if the symptoms improve earlier

Store antibiotic in proper place

Do not take same antibiotic by yourself even for similar infection

Do not take antibiotic after expiry date

Consult your Doctor



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