

Checklist

Saving life during surgery

DR MUHAMMAD RAJIB HOSSAIN

"A surgeon left a sponge inside his patients." "A patient died of fatal infection after surgery due to the failure to ensure sterility." These are commonly reported surgical mistakes in Bangladesh. Many others are not reported. Whether we have a statistics or not, we all admit that mistakes happen. And the fact is, more than half of these mistakes are avoidable.

Not just in developing countries like Bangladesh, more than 60% of patients worldwide including developed countries have one of six key safety measures missed during surgery. Almost 7 million surgical patients would suffer significant complications each year, 1 million of whom would die during or immediately after surgery.

Considering surgical mistakes as a major public health problem, World Health Organisation (WHO), took an initiative to reduce avoidable deaths due to unsafe surgery. After years of discussion, research and input from anesthesiologists, operating theatre nurses, surgeons, patients and other professionals the WHO expert team developed an effective tool—The Checklist.

The checklist involves a series of simple checks such as ensuring that the correct patient is on the table, operating on the right part of the body, anesthesia machine



is working properly and ensure everyone and everything is prepared to manage any complications. The checks are done in three situations in a surgical procedure—before induction of anesthesia, before skin incision, before patient leaves the operative room.

This is a short-one page 19 item checklist that takes only 3 minutes but the impact is



with a variety of surgical procedures by greater than 30%. Moreover, the effect was of similar magnitude in both high and low/middle income country sites. Even in place like rural Tanzania, hospitals were able to implement the checklist and see substantial improvements in outcomes, all at essentially no cost to the system. The Checklist has not only impacted outcomes, but it has also improved communication among the surgical team, and thus quality of care.

234 million major operations are performed annually across the world—roughly one operation per every 25 people. With the increasing use of complex technology, number of procedures and complexity in medicine, mistakes are inevitable. Such as all patients should receive an antibiotic within one hour before the incision is made, a practice known to reduce the rate of surgical-site infections by up to 50%. But antibiotics are not given consistently, even in the most sophisticated health centers. An estimated 200-300 'wrong-person' operations taking place each year in most developed country in the world like USA. It sounds silly but happens everywhere. The simple solution to avoid most of these complications is a checklist.

E-mail: rajib.hossain@theladystar.net

HEALTH bulletin

Common infections may increase risk for memory decline



Exposure to common infections is linked to memory and brain function—even if the infections never made you ill, according to research presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2014.

Researchers found an index of antibody levels caused by exposure to Chlamydia pneumoniae, Helicobacter pylori, cytomegalovirus, and herpes simplex viruses 1 and 2 was associated with worse cognitive performance, including memory, speed of mental processing, abstract thinking, planning and reasoning ability.

Premature birth linked to asthma, wheezing in childhood

A new analysis of existing research suggests that premature babies face a higher risk of developing asthma and wheezing disorders when they are older.

Researchers from Harvard Medical School, the Maastricht University Medical Center in the Netherlands and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland examined 30 studies and have found that premature children (born before 37 weeks of gestation) were 46 percent more likely to develop asthma or wheezing problems than kids who were not born prematurely. Full-term birth is generally considered about 40 weeks' gestation.

Breast self-exam: 5 easy steps

DR RUKSANA PARVIN

Breast cancer is the leading cancer killer among women aged 20–59 years. Breast Self-Exam (BSE) is an important way to detect the cancer at its earliest stage when it can be cured.

Women at their 20s should start breast self-exam. Women should be aware of how their breasts normally look and feel and report any new breast changes to a health professional as soon as they are found. Finding a breast change does not necessarily mean there is a cancer.

BSE is a step-by-step approach and women should maintain a specific schedule to examine their breasts. The best time for a woman to examine her breasts is when they are not tender or swollen e.g. 5th day of menstruation.

The following 5 steps are described below for readers to help them understand how it should be done.

Step 1: Begin by looking at your breasts in the mirror with your shoulders straight and your arms on your hips. If you see any of the following changes, bring them to your doctor's attention:

- Dimpling, puckering or bulging of the skin.
- A nipple that has changed position or an inverted nipple (pushed inward instead of sticking out).
- Redness, soreness, rash or swelling.

Step 2: Now, raise your arms and look for the same changes.

Step 3: While you are at the mirror, look for any signs of fluid coming out of one or both nipples (this could be a watery, milky, or

yellow fluid or blood).

Step 4: Next, feel your breasts while lying down, using your right hand to feel your left breast and vice versa. Use a firm, smooth touch with the first few finger pads of your hand, keeping the fingers flat and together. Cover the entire breast from top to bottom, side to side—from your collarbone to the top of your abdomen, and from your armpit to your cleavage.

Step 5: Finally, feel your breasts while you are standing or sitting. Many women find that the easiest way to feel their breasts while they are taking shower.

The writer is an Assistant Professor, Department Of Surgery, M H Samorita Medical College and Hospital, Dhaka. E-mail: ruksanaparvin@yahoo.com



PEER EDUCATION

New obesity weapon: kids teaching kids

When older kids teach younger children about nutrition and the benefits of exercise, the little ones seem to lose weight and gain knowledge about healthy living, Canadian researchers report.

Such a program—called Healthy Buddies—was tested in Manitoba elementary schools. It helped heavy kids lose an average of half an inch off their waist and increased their knowledge of diet and exercise, the researchers said. They also said that engaging older youth in delivering health messages to younger peers is an effective method for preventing weight gain, improving knowledge of healthy living and increasing self-esteem. The effects of this peer mentoring model of healthy living promotion is particularly effective for overweight children.

This approach—detailed in the recent issue of the journal *JAMA Paediatrics*—could help curb the obesity epidemic among young children.

Researchers designed a study where 19 schools were randomly assigned to use the Healthy Buddies curriculum or their regular instruction during the 2009-'10 school year.

Over the course of the school year, the researchers looked at changes in waist size and body-mass index (BMI), as well as physical activity, heart fitness, self-image and knowledge about healthy living and diet.

They found that the waist size of children in the Healthy Buddies program dropped an average of half an inch compared with children in the regular curriculum. There was no difference in Body Mass Index (BMI)—a measurement of fat based on height and weight—between the groups.



Toys with straps or strings—even guitar straps—can pose a strangulation hazard for young children. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission suggests how to protect children from this risk:

- Do not give toys with straps or strings to children under age 3 years.
- If your child has a toy guitar or other toy with straps or strings that may wrap around a child's neck, cut them off before allowing a young child to play with these toys.
- Beware of necklaces, ribbons and cords that may wrap around a child's neck.

/StarHealthBD

Knowing for better living

7 serious symptoms in children to never ignore!

1. High fever
2. Skin infections or rashes
3. Frequent sore throats
4. Breathing problems
5. Severe stomach bug
6. Stiff neck
7. Sleep problems or change in behaviour

Ensure healthy foods for children

Ensure enough sleep and exercise

Ensure child's physical, mental & social well-being

Keep children safe



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