

Preventing occupational hearing loss

STAR HEALTH DESK

Occupational noise-induced hearing loss is a common cause of deafness around the world. Prolonged exposure to noise at work can lead to irreversible hearing loss called sensorineural hearing loss. It is due to the damage of the nerve cells of the inner ear. Once destroyed, these nerve cells would not recover. The resulting hearing impairment will be permanent, leading to hearing loss. When a person works in a noisy environment, the damage caused to his hearing will be in direct proportion to the intensity of the noise and the duration of exposure time.

The World Health Organisation defines disabling hearing impairment in adults as permanent hearing threshold level of 41 decibels or greater. At this level of impairment most people can only distinguish words spoken at one metre if they are spoken in a raised voice.

Workers of certain industries and occupations who are at risk of noise-induced hearing loss include:

- Factories for garments, machinery and manufacturing items



- Construction
- Jobs involving loud music like musicians and orchestra conductors
- Mining industry
- Jobs involving the personnel to use drilling and other machinery
- Airline ground maintenance
- Truck, bus or train drivers

- Agriculture and farming with machinery
- Military, police and firefighters

Sources of non-occupational noise include high-volume music and church bands and exposure to noise from traffic during travel. Children may be exposed to high levels of noise from some toys

that make noise; they may be affected by long term exposure to traffic noises.

The preferred solution to excessive noise exposure is to completely eliminate the source of the loud noise. When this is not possible or practical, the legal requirement is to minimise exposure through a hierarchy of

controls such as the following:

- substitute the noise source with quieter machinery or processes
- isolate the noise source from workers
- apply engineering solutions (e.g. fit mufflers, redesign the noise source, and install noise guards or enclosures)
- apply administrative solutions (e.g. schedule noisy work for when fewest workers are present, provide signs and quiet areas for breaks), and when none of the above are reasonably practicable
- provide personal hearing protectors (e.g. ear muffs and plugs).

Within this hierarchy, priority is given to the source of the noise, followed by the path of transmission and, as a last resort, the exposed worker. A comprehensive hearing conservation programme or noise control programme should include strict adherence to the hierarchy of controls as well as assessments of noise exposure and hearing; education with respect to risks, solutions and responsibilities; and training on noise control and personal protection.

OUTBREAK

WHO urges screening of travelers to contain Ebola outbreak

African nations hit hard by the Ebola outbreak should start screening all passengers leaving international airports, seaports and major ground crossings, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended recently.

The United Nations' health agency reiterated that the risk of passengers transmitting the Ebola virus during air travel is low. Still, anyone with an illness or symptoms typical of the highly virulent disease should not be allowed to travel unless it is for appropriate medical care, the agency said in a statement.

Symptoms of Ebola include a sudden fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, poor kidney and liver function and, in some cases, both internal and external bleeding.

Unlike diseases such as tuberculosis or flu, Ebola is not spread by breathing air from an infected person. Transmission requires direct contact with blood, secretions, organs or other body fluids of infected living or dead persons or animals, the agency said.

"Travelers are, in any event, advised to avoid all such contacts and routinely practice careful hygiene, like hand washing," the agency said.

The latest WHO figures put the death toll from the outbreak at nearly 1,070, with approximately 2,000 confirmed cases. At this point, Ebola cases have been reported in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and, to a lesser extent, Nigeria. But, the magnitude of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa may be far greater than current statistics indicate, WHO officials reported.

Ebola has a mortality rate approaching 90%, according to WHO officials.

HEALTH bulletin



Common chemicals may lower testosterone levels

Exposure to certain chemicals commonly found in plastics and other products is associated with lower levels of testosterone in men, women and children, according to a new study published in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism.

Testosterone is the main sex hormone in men, but it is also involved in a variety of functions in both men and women, including brain function, bone density, physical growth, strength and heart health.

Good neighbours are good for your heart

Having good neighbors may reduce your heart attack risk, according to the findings published in the Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health.

People who had reported higher levels of neighbourhood social cohesion were less likely to suffer a heart attack, the study found. Specifically, a single unit increase in neighborhood social cohesion was associated with a 17% reduced risk of heart attack.

Denmark highlights commitment to girls and women

Copenhagen announced as the official location of the Women Deliver 2016 global conference

STAR HEALTH DESK

Advocacy organisation Women Deliver and the Danish Minister for Trade and Development Corporation, Mogens Jensen, recently announced that the next Women Deliver global conference will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in May 2016. The announcement was made at the Invest in Girls and Women — Everybody Wins event held at the Danish Parliament, where Denmark's new Strategic Framework for Gender Equality, Rights and Diversity was also launched.

The Women Deliver 2016 Conference — the fourth triennial global meeting — will be the largest gathering on girls' and women's health and rights in the last decade and the first large global conference on these issues following the launch of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The meeting will offer advocates, activists, researchers, policymakers, young people, journalists, private sector leaders and members of civil society an unprecedented opportunity to strategise on how to operationalise these new goals and make sure that investments in girls and women become a priority at the national and global levels.

The Women Deliver 2016 Conference will build on momentum



generated around the previous landmark conferences held in 2013 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which was attended by 4,500 participants from 149 countries; in 2010 in Washington, D.C.; and in 2007 in London. The conferences have in the past drawn high-level attendance — including by the UN Secretary-General — and have generated action, spurred new ideas, and shared solutions that continue to make a difference for girls and women around the world.

Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mary of Denmark is active in working to create awareness on girls' and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, global maternal health and child mortality issues, and acts as patron of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Maternity

Foundation.

"I am proud that Denmark will be hosting the Women Deliver 2016 Conference, and look very much forward to not only welcoming the world's leading girls' and women's health and rights advocates to Copenhagen for this historic event, but also to be participating once again in what is an inspirational, powerful and potentially game-changing forum," said Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mary of Denmark, who has also been a committed member of the High-Level Task Force for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) since its establishment in 2012. "Together, we need to increase investments in women and girls. If we can close the gender gap, it will be a win for the individual, for global development, and for economic growth — everybody wins."

The Danish Ministry also launched a new Strategic Framework for Gender Equality, Rights and Diversity to guide its efforts to improve the lives of girls and women around the world. The new framework focuses on the potential of gender equality to transform societies, and highlights how Denmark will help girls and women access resources and seize opportunities that will enable them to take control over their own lives.

Health News

Pass tobacco control rules with no more delay



According to Articles 11 and 18(1) of Bangladesh Constitution, Bangladesh government has a duty to control tobacco to reduce and prevent the serious health hazards of tobacco. Therefore strict application of tobacco control law is also a must.

However, this 2013 amended tobacco control Act is not being properly implemented. Public health is threatened as a result. Speakers and tobacco control activists spoke these at a leaflet campaign pledging urgent passing of the rules at Mymensingh Railway Station in the recently organised by SERAC-Bangladesh

Orion Pharma's new product against osteoporosis unveiled



Orion Pharma Ltd. Has recently launched a new product **Boncare**, which can be used to increase bone development when it is used with Calcium and Vitamin D combination for the treatment of osteoporosis.

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In Bangladesh...

Only heart diseases account for 12.5% of all hospital deaths!

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Check your diabetes regularly

Control your body weight

Avoid smoking

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