

Higher global burden of tuberculosis

STAR HEALTH DESK

Recent intensive efforts to improve collection and reporting of data on tuberculosis (TB) are shedding new light on the epidemic, revealing that there are almost half a million more cases of the disease than previously estimated. WHO's "Global Tuberculosis Report 2014", published recently, shows that 9 million people developed TB in 2013, and 1.5 million died, including 360,000 people who were HIV positive.

The report stresses, however, that the mortality rate from TB is still falling and has dropped by 45% since 1990, while the number of people developing the disease is declining by an average 1.5% a year. An estimated 37 million lives have been saved through effective diagnosis and treatment of TB since 2000.

Following a concerted effort by countries, by WHO and by multiple partners, investment in national surveys and routine surveillance efforts has substantially increased. This is providing us with much more and better data, bringing us closer and closer to understanding the true



burden of tuberculosis," says Dr Mario Raviglione, Director of the Global TB Programme, WHO.

Although higher, these revised figures fall within the upper limit of previous WHO estimates. The report, however, underlines that a staggering number of lives are being lost to a curable disease and confirms that TB is the second biggest killer disease from a single infectious agent. In

addition, around 3 million people who fall ill from TB are still being 'missed' by health systems each year either because they are not diagnosed, or because they are diagnosed but not reported.

Insufficient funding is hampering efforts to combat the global epidemic. An estimated US\$ 8 billion is needed each year for a full response, but there is

currently an annual shortfall of US\$ 2 billion, which must be addressed.

Diagnostic capacity for MDR-TB increasing faster than treatment capacity

The multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) crisis continues, with an estimated 480,000 new cases in 2013. Worldwide, about 3.5% of all people who

developed TB in 2013 had this form of the disease, which is much harder to treat and has significantly poorer cure rates. While the estimated percentage of new TB cases that have MDR-TB globally remains unchanged, there are severe epidemics in some regions, particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In many settings around the world, the treatment success rate is alarmingly low. Furthermore, extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB), which is even more expensive and difficult to treat than MDR-TB, has now been reported in 100 countries.

Since 2009, with more laboratories rolling out rapid tests, there has been a tripling of MDR-TB cases being diagnosed. In 2013, 136,000 MDR-TB cases were detected and 97,000 people were started on treatment. Although the number of patients treated has increased three-fold since 2009, at least 39,000 patients, diagnosed with this form of TB, were not being treated last year and globally only 48% of patients were cured.

Source: World Health Organisation

HEALTH TIPS



Get healthy before pregnancy

Planning to become pregnant? Now is the time to get your body in shape and ready for baby. Try to follow these pre-conception advice for a healthy pregnancy:

- Take a folic acid supplement every day to help lower the risk of having a baby with birth defects.
- Avoid alcohol, and quit smoking.
- Maintain good control of any chronic medical condition, such as diabetes, asthma or epilepsy.
- Get all recommended vaccinations.
- Check with your doctor about the safety of your medications, vitamins and herbal supplements.
- Avoid exposure to toxic chemicals or substances.

HEALTHbulletin

Abdominal fat linked to raised heart, cancer risks

People with excessive belly fat have a greater risk of heart disease and cancer than those who have fat in other body areas, a study published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology reveals.

Coffee might lower risk of liver cancer

Drinking coffee might reduce your risk of liver cancer, a review published in the journal Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology suggests.

The researchers said that drinking coffee may reduce the risk of hepatocellular carcinoma, the most common type of liver cancer, by about 40%.

Wash your hands with soap and water after every contact with sick people

#Ebola

World Health Organization

WaSH critical to child nutrition

MEHEREEN AZIZ

Children are at their most vulnerable stages of mental and physical development during the 1,000 day window of opportunity — the time from conception to the child's second birthday. Good water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) practices during this critical time can reduce the number of infections and support good appetites.

Even if families feed their children the right food in the right quantities, much of the lifelong benefits of good nutrition are undermined when those children become repeatedly sick from infections. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 50% of malnutrition is associated with repeated diarrhoea or intestinal worm infections as a result of unsafe water, inadequate sanitation or insufficient hygiene. Children who are sick have problems digesting the food they eat, and thus the nutrients from the food that are essential for their physical and mental development are not fully absorbed by the body.

According to WHO, approximately a third of all child deaths are attributable to nutrition-related factors, such as low birth weight, stunting (low height for age) and severe wasting, all of which are closely linked to a lack of access to water and particularly sanitation and hygiene.

Caregivers and children need to wash their hands properly with soap and water before food preparations and feeding, and after defecation. In addition, there must be an improvement in facilities for and usage of

safe drinking water, and the proper use of sanitary latrines must be promoted. Proper WaSH practices can reduce the spread of deadly diseases like pneumonia and diarrhoea, combat other illnesses and infections, and prevent decreased appetite, which is a barrier to ensuring optimal feeding practices.

The main barriers to best WaSH practices must be addressed. There is a lack of convenience, as many households have no access to safe water or soap. According to Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2011, only 10% of households in Bangladesh use any form of water treatment prior to drinking, such as boiling or filtering. Almost half (47%) of the

country's households use non-improved toilet facilities. In addition, only 17% of rural households and 46% of urban households have soap and water.

The lack of proper WaSH practices also has to do with misconceptions about their importance. There is a lack of social pressure because hand washing and maintaining hygienic latrines is not common in communities due to a significant knowledge gap. Behaviour change is required in order to make best WaSH practices a priority in society.

Mehereen Aziz writes on behalf of the Civil Society Alliance for Scaling Up Nutrition, an official affiliate of the UN-led global Scaling Up Nutrition Movement.



Human chain against dowry, child marriage

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Girls and women in countries like Bangladesh face violence everyday due to dowry and child marriage. They face discrimination and get deprived of right to education, health and economic future. None can ignore that the girl facing child marriage today could have become a resource in the society while she is turning into a burden in most cases. Furthermore, by providing dowry to grooms at marriages, certain classes of greedy people are being greedier in demanding more after marriage as well. When they don't get a positive response from the wives' part they start torturing and most of the times it leads to fatal consequences.

In order to eliminate this curse from the society, women must be protected. Despite laws and rules, these crimes are not stopped, because not all classes of people are involved in implementing those laws, especially the youth. Therefore, SERAC-Bangladesh with the support from Women Deliver trained up 50 young volunteers in Gauripur Upazilla of Mymensingh and those youngsters organised a large human chain with hundreds of students and mass people in that area.



Knowing for better living

In Bangladesh ...

1 out of 5 men suffers from osteoporosis !

Take calcium rich foods like milk, dairy products, nuts, soya foods, leafy vegetables & fruits

Take Vitamin-D rich foods like seafood, cod liver oil, egg & mushroom

Exercise regularly like walking and jogging

Take medicines consulting with physicians



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