

Noncommunicable diseases take 16m lives annually

STAR HEALTH DESK

Urgent government action is needed to meet global targets to reduce the burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), and prevent the annual toll of 16 million people dying prematurely — before the age of 70 — from heart and lung diseases, stroke, cancer and diabetes, according to a new report of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

"The global community has the chance to change the course of the NCD epidemic," says WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan, who launched the "Global status report on noncommunicable diseases 2014". "By investing just US\$ 1-3 dollars per person per year, countries can dramatically reduce illness and death from NCDs. In 2015, every country needs to set national targets and implement cost-effective actions. If they do not, millions of lives will continue to be lost too soon."

The report states that most premature NCD deaths are preventable. Of the 38 million lives lost to NCDs in 2012, 16 million or 42% were premature and avoidable — up from 14.6



million in 2000.

Nearly 5 years into the global effort to reduce premature deaths from NCDs by 25% by 2025, the report provides a fresh perspective on key lessons learned.

Premature NCD deaths can be significantly reduced through government policies reducing tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets and physical inactivity, and delivering universal health care. For

example, in Brazil the NCD mortality rate is dropping 1.8% per year due in part to the expansion of primary health care.

But the report calls for more action to be taken to curb the epidemic, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where deaths due to NCDs are overtaking those from infectious diseases. Almost three quarters of all NCD deaths (28 million), and 82% of the 16 million premature

deaths, occur in low- and middle-income countries.

"Best buys" to reduce the burden

The WHO report provides the baseline for monitoring implementation of the "Global action plan for NCDs 2013-2020", aimed at reducing the number of premature deaths from NCDs by 25% by 2025. Outlined in the action plan are 9 voluntary global targets that address key NCD risk

factors.

Examples of regional and country "best buy" successes: Turkey was the first country to implement all the "best-buy" measures for tobacco reduction. In 2012, the country increased the size of health-warning labels to cover 65% of the total surface area of each tobacco product. Tobacco taxes now make up 80% of the total retail price, and there is currently a total ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship nationwide. As a result, the country saw a 13.4% relative decline in smoking rates from 2008 to 2012.

The report also states examples from Hungary, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Canada, Mexico and the USA.

Working on the ground in more than 150 countries, WHO is helping develop and share "best buy" solutions so that they can be implemented more widely. WHO is also helping countries understand the dimensions that influence NCDs outside the health sector, including public policies in agriculture, education, food production, trade, taxation and urban development.

ILIZAROV



Management of khock-knees

DR MD MOFAKHKHARUL BARI

Genu valgum, commonly called 'khock-knees' is a condition where the knees angle in and touch one another when the legs are straightened. Individuals with severe valgus deformities are typically unable to touch their feet together while simultaneously straightening the legs.

Mild genu valgum can be seen in children from 2-6, and is often corrected naturally as children grow. However, the condition may continue or worsen with age particularly when it is the result of a disease such as rickets or obesity. Genu valgum that is present since birth or has no known cause is called 'Idiopathic genu valgum'.

As for treatment, there is no known cure for khock-knees after childhood. If the condition persists or worsens into late childhood and adulthood a corrective open wedge osteotomy of the thigh bones Ilizarov technique may be advised which is cosmetically fantastic. No hardware is needed for internal fixation, only one time surgery is needed. If it is not corrected, genu valgum in adulthood may lead to injury and long standing knee problems.

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HEALTH bulletin

How to live longer



Experimental vaccine shipped to Liberia

The first batch of an experimental vaccine against Ebola is on its way to Liberia, reports BBC. The shipment will be the first potentially preventative medicine to reach one of the hardest hit countries.

But experts say that, with Ebola cases falling, it may be difficult to establish whether the jab offers any protection against the virus.

It has been produced by British company GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and the US National Institutes of Health.

Gates sees 'miracle' tools for AIDS by 2030 in vaccine and drugs

Two new tools to fight AIDS should be available by 2030 in the form of a vaccine and new intense drug treatments, ending most cases of a disease that has killed millions in the past 30 years, Bill Gates said, reports Reuters.

The Microsoft founder, whose philanthropic foundation has poured millions of dollars into medical research, told the World Economic Forum in Davos the "two miracles" were within reach in the coming years.

Gates, whose Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation plays a major role in funding medical research, is also optimistic about the fight against malaria, where work on a vaccine is more advanced than for AIDS.

As we are getting older, people become more vulnerable to diseases. You might think that there is nothing you can do, but new research suggests otherwise. In a pilot study, lifestyle changes boosted an enzyme that increases the aging process reverse. Other studies also found diet and exercise can protect telomeres (an essential part of human cells that affect how our cells age). So healthy habits may slow aging at the cellular level.

You can live longer if you religiously follow the following things.

1. **Be conscientious.** A study found that conscientious people do more things to protect their health and make choices that lead to stronger relationships and better careers.

2. **Make friends.** Science has given you one more reason to be grateful for your friends — they might help you live longer. There is a link between plentiful social connections and longevity.

3. **Quit smoking.** While it's no secret that giving up cigarettes can lengthen your days, according to a British study, quitting at age 30 could increase your life span by an entire decade. But it is never too late to quit smoking.

4. **Embrace the siesta.** There is scientific evidence that napping may help you to live longer. Study shows regular nappers are 37% less likely to die from heart diseases than occasional nappers.

5. **Healthy diet.** Diets high in fruits, vegetables, whole grain, olive oil, sunflower oil and fish will boost your health. Avoid red meat, ghee, butter, soyabean, mustard, junk foods, sweets, rice. If you can stick with healthy diet, you can lower



your cholesterol, sugar and can prevent yourself from diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart disease.

6. **Get married.** Study shows that married people tend to outlive their single counterparts. People who are divorced or widowed have lower mortality rates than those who have never been married.

7. **Loose weight.** If you are over weight, slimming down can protect against diabetes, heart disease and other life shorting conditions. Belly fat appears to be particularly harmful, so focus on deflating your tummy if it comes beyond your chest. Try to walk briskly 45 minutes 5 times a week. If possible do some exercise according to your age.

8. **Make sleep a priority.** Getting enough good quality sleep can lower the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and mood disorders.

Sufficient sleep will also help you to recover from illness faster. Sleeping less than 5 hours per night boosts the risk of premature death, so make

sleep a priority and sleep at least 5-6 hrs. per day.

9. **Manage stress.** Research suggesting that life style changes include stress management not only help to prevent heart disease but may actually reverse it. Although avoiding stress is not a viable option for most people, there are effective ways to control it. Try yoga, meditation, or deep breathing.

10. **Get spiritual and forgive.** Religious services tend to live longer than people who never do this. Forgiveness will reduce anxiety, lower blood pressure and help to breathe freely and easily. Chronic anger is linked to decreased lung function, heart disease, stroke and other ailments.

Behave gently with people, talk softly, don't get excited, try to check your temper — these activities will boost you to live longer.

The write-up is compiled by Dr Golam Nabi, Asst Prof of Medicine at Z H Sikder Womens Medical College & Hospital.

Stigma and discrimination related to psychological and psychiatric illnesses

Stigma and discrimination continue to be a reality in the lives of people suffering from mental illness and prove to be one of the greatest barriers to regaining a normal lifestyle and health.

Many people with mental health problems have said that the stigma of mental ill health is more disabling than the illness itself. Their problems are made worse by the stigma and discrimination that they experience, not only from society but also from families, friends and employers.

Research has shown that people with mental health problems are pre-judged. They find it hard to get jobs and sustain friendships and relationships.

Most people have little knowledge about mental illness and their opinions are often factually incorrect. They believe that people with mental ill health are violent and dangerous, when in fact, they are more at risk of being attacked or harming themselves than harming other people.

It is seen that most people who experience mental health problems recover fully or are able to live with and manage them, especially if they get prompt and proper treatment.

Stigma is often seen as a potential clinical risk factor. It delays treatment seeking, worsens course and outcome, reduces compliance and increases the risk of relapse; causing further disability, discrimination, and isolation even in persons who have accessed mental health services. The delay in treatment due to stigma causes potential complications like suicide, violence, harm to others, and deterioration in capacity to look after one's physical health.

We need to change our negative attitude and beliefs about mental illness. Otherwise we will not be able to come out of this vicious situation.

The write-up is compiled by Dr Satparkash. E-mail: drsat@protoyemical.com



Knowing for better living

Low fruit and vegetable intake accounts for about **20%** of cardiovascular disease worldwide

- Check your blood pressure regularly
- Check your diabetes regularly
- Control your body weight
- Avoid smoking
- Exercise regularly
- Consult your Doctor



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