

Investing on neglected tropical diseases

STAR HEALTH DESK

A new report of the World Health Organisation (WHO) urges affected countries to increase investment in tackling 17 neglected tropical diseases to improve the health and well-being of more than 1.5 billion people. This investment represents as little as 0.1% of current domestic expenditure on health in affected low- and middle-income countries for the period 2015-2030. An annual investment of US\$ 2.9 billion until 2020 is required to reach the targets. But in following years annual investments will decrease as diseases are reduced or eliminated.

Neglected tropical diseases cause blindness, disfigurement, permanent disability and death, particularly among the poor. WHO's new report, *Investing to overcome the impact of neglected tropical diseases*, outlines an investment case and essential package of interventions for these diseases.

Need for increased domestic investment targets

The report sets specific investment targets for many of the 17



Some filariasis patients are getting morbidity management care at a community clinic by a team of National NTD Programme at an endemic region in Bangladesh.

diseases. It stresses that countries must make firm and sustainable budgetary commitments if they are to meet WHO targets and accelerate progress.

The impacts

By 2017, the number of people receiving preventive treatment for at least one of the diseases should reach 1.5 billion. As diseases are reduced or eliminated, the number of people needing and receiving treatment will obviously

fall. Early detection of some neglected tropical diseases will allow more children to continue school and adults to work while reducing the costs associated with treating more advanced forms of these diseases.

Moving towards universal health coverage will ensure that all people have access to preventive and curative health services for neglected tropical diseases without the risk of financial hardship

when paying for them.

Moving forward

In the face of climate change countries need to strengthen their ability to anticipate and meet new challenges in terms of vector ecology and management.

Diseases spread by insects are on the move because of rapid and unplanned urbanisation, population movement and environmental change. Dengue is one of them: it is now present in

more than 150 countries.

Many countries have recognised the importance and cost effectiveness of investing in preventing and treating neglected tropical diseases. More than 70 countries are already implementing or ready to kick off national plans for accelerated control.

Recent advances in combating neglected tropical diseases

In 2013, Colombia became the first country where WHO verified the elimination of river blindness (onchocerciasis), followed by Ecuador in 2014.

Bangladesh and Nepal are poised to eliminate visceral leishmaniasis as a public-health problem by the end of 2015.

The number of new cases of sleeping sickness (human African trypanosomiasis) has dropped to fewer than 10 000 annually and this for the first time in 30 years with 6 314 cases reported in 2013.

In 2009 approximately 30% of children in need of preventive treatment for soil-transmitted helminthiases were receiving it. Reaching 50% of children with this treatment by end 2015 is achievable.

Source: World Health Organisation

HAVE A NICE DAY

The secrets inside you

DR RUBAUL MURSHED

These days, we have been talking about food and health more often than ever before. But I found that general people were not that much aware of foods' basic nature. We need to think about food's pH seriously. In simple words, pH means the degree of acidity or alkalinity of a substance. Eating an alkaline diet is extremely important as our blood pH level needs to stay between 7.35 and 7.45.

Blood pH is a measure of how acidic or alkaline the blood is! For instance, stomach acid has a pH close to 0 (the most acidic), and pure distilled water is 7, lies at a neutral zone. So blood pH is more than 7 and to some extent alkaline. Therefore, alkaline diet helps in balancing blood pH level. We need to help our bodies by eating a more alkaline diet with less acidic foods. Otherwise, there will be a constant stress on the body and the immune system to bring the blood pH back into balance.

Unfortunately, the conventional Bangla food is extremely off-balanced and contains significantly more acidic foods than alkaline foods. It means we need to shift the balance from the typically acidic diet to a more alkaline diet.

A good rule of thumb is that 60-80% of our diet should be from the more alkaline foods, and 20-40% from the more acidic foods. Processed sugar, dairy, conventional meat, coffee etc. are some of the most acid-producing foods. If someone wants to come out from acidic *danger* — eat and drink green juice, leafy greens, cucumber, melons etceteras; these are some of the more alkaline-producing foods. Keep in your mind that if your body is in a very acidic state, it will look for a sense of balance or stability, and may do so by drawing nutrients from the bones. When the body is in an alkaline state, one will be less prone to cellular damage and illness.

HEALTH bulletin

HIV vaccine brings fresh hope



A radical new approach to vaccination seems to completely protect monkeys from HIV, US scientists report.

Vaccines normally train the immune system to fight an infection. Instead, researchers at the Scripps Research Institute in California have altered the DNA of monkeys to give their cells HIV-fighting properties.

The team describe it as "a big deal" and want to start human trials soon. Independent experts say the idea is worth "strong consideration".

Experiments, reported in the journal *Nature*, showed the monkeys were protected from all types of HIV for at least 34 weeks.

Malaria 'huge threat' on Myanmar-India border

Resistance to the drug that has saved millions of lives from malaria has been detected over a wider area than previously thought, scientists warn.

The ability of the malaria parasite to shrug off the effects of artemisinin has been spreading since it emerged in South East Asia. Tests, published in *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, now show this resistance on the verge of entering India.

Experts said the development was "alarming" and an "enormous threat". Deaths from malaria have nearly halved since 2000, and the infection now kills about 584,000 people each year.



Fruits to be avoided during pregnancy

Pregnancy is a critical time for women. Fruits and vegetables are an extremely important part of nutrition during pregnancy. But there are many fruits and vegetable to be avoided during pregnancy. Some fruits mentioned below should be avoided during pregnancy.

Pineapple:

There are vast health benefits of pineapple and they are essentially good for women during the menopause. But pregnant women should strictly keep away from them because of multiple hazards to the child inside the womb.

- Pineapple increases the risk of abortion.
- The consumption of pineapple can cause the risk of uterine contractions which are dangerous for the growing womb.
- Bromelain present in pineapple which softens the cervix.

So it is better to avoid this fruit completely. If pineapple is your favorite fruit or if you cannot resist this fruit, please talk to your doctor.

Grapes:

Eating grapes during pregnancy is shrouded in controversy. Many people say that it is perfectly safe and others argue that it is better to avoid grapes during pregnancy.

- The main reason is the high amounts of resveratrol present in grapes. This chemical can cause toxicity for the expectant mother.
- Digestive system of pregnant women is weak and the skin of black grapes becomes non-digestible by the weakened digestive system of pregnant women.
- Acidity becomes common along with nausea and vomiting for pregnant women if she eats too many grapes. Loose motions and diarrhoea may occur due to eating too many grapes.

But all sorts of complications can be avoided by eating definite amount of grapes during pregnancy. You should avoid grapes in empty stomach or if you experience acid reflux.

Tamarind:

Tamarind in one of the source of

Vitamin C. but excess Vitamin C causes harmful effect on pregnant women.

- Self induced miscarriage or abortion may occur due to excess Vitamin C. Taking too much Vitamin C in the first month of pregnancy can reduce the production of progesterone, which can cause miscarriage.
- Chance of pre-term birth may be increased due to high doses of Vitamin C.
- Cell damage in fetuses may result from too much consumption of Vitamin C.

Papaya:

Both the unripe and semi-ripe varieties of papayas are rich in latex, which should be avoided during pregnancy. Papayas heat up the body and should be avoided during the third and final semester.

The write-up is compiled by Taslima Begum, Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacy, Primeasia University. E-mail: taslima.begum@primeasia.edu.bd

Medical Update

Fifteen-minute Ebola test approved

The first rapid blood test for Ebola has been approved for use by the World Health Organisation, reports BBC.

It should allow patients to be identified, isolated and cared for as quickly as possible in an attempt to bring an end to the outbreak that has killed more than 9,300 people.

It is less accurate than conventional tests, but takes minutes rather than hours to get a result.

The test also works without electricity so it can be used in remote regions.

Current Ebola testing requires a laboratory to analyse the blood for fragments of the virus's genetic material.

It can take between 12 and 24 hours to get a definitive answer.

The ReBOV Antigen Rapid Test, developed by US company Corgenix, searches the blood for a different part of the virus.

Trials in West Africa suggest it correctly identifies about 92% of people who have Ebola.

The World Health Organisation said, "While less accurate, the antigen test is rapid, easy to perform and does not require electricity."



/StarHealthBD

Knowing for better living

Smoking, being more than 10 kg overweight, physical inactivity and immobility can lead to the formation of **blood clots**

Take low fat diet

Be physically active

Eat vegetables and fresh fruits

Maintain healthy weight

Consult your Doctor



In Search of Excellence

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