

Dementia: a global public health challenge

STAR HEALTH DESK

Dementia is a syndrome, usually of a chronic or progressive nature, caused by a variety of brain illnesses that affect memory, thinking, behaviour and ability to perform everyday activities.

The number of people living with dementia worldwide is currently estimated at 47.5 million and is projected to increase to 75.6 million by 2030. The number of cases of dementia are estimated to more than triple by 2050.

Dementia is overwhelming not only for the people who have it, but also for their caregivers and families. There is a lack of awareness and understanding of dementia in most countries, resulting in stigmatisation, barriers to diagnosis and care, and impacting caregivers, families and societies physically, psychologically and economically.

Dementia is not a normal part of ageing

Although dementia mainly affects older people, it is not a normal part of ageing.

A new case of dementia is diagnosed every 4 seconds

The total number of new cases of dementia each year worldwide is nearly 7.7 million, implying 1 new case every 4 seconds. This is



a very significant number to pay attention.

Huge economic impact; US\$ 604 billion per year

The high cost of the disease will challenge health systems to deal with the predicted future increase of cases. The costs are estimated at US\$ 604 billion per year at present and are set to increase even more quickly than the prevalence.

Caregivers experience high strain

Caring for dementia patients is

overwhelming for caregivers. The stresses include physical, emotional and economic pressures. Care givers require support from the health, social, financial and legal systems.

Early diagnosis improves the quality of life

The principal goals for dementia care are:

- diagnosing cases early;
- optimising physical health, cognition, activity and well-being;
- detecting and treating

behavioural and psychological symptoms; and

- providing information and long-term support to caregivers.

People with dementia and their families are often discriminated against

People with dementia are frequently denied the basic rights and freedoms available to others. For example, physical and chemical restraints are used extensively in aged-care facilities and acute-care settings.

Awareness and advocacy are needed

Improving the awareness and understanding of dementia across all levels of society is needed to decrease discrimination and to improve the quality of life for people with dementia and their caregivers.

More research and evaluation is required

More research is needed to develop new and more effective treatments and to better understand the causes of dementia. Research that identifies the modifiable risk factors of dementia is still scarce.

Dementia is a public health priority

To address this important health priority there are actions that can be taken:

- promote a dementia friendly society;
- make dementia a public health and social care priority everywhere;
- improve attitudes to, and understanding of, dementia;
- invest in health and social systems to improve care and services for people with dementia and their caregivers; and
- Increase research on dementia.

Source: World Health Organisation

HAVE A NICE DAY

Smartphones are not 'SMART'



These days Smartphones are inseparable. Our obsession with mobile gadgets has become larger-than-life. Plenty of research illustrates how we are becoming addicted to these more and more. If so, you are not alone — even doctors are getting on board.

Whereas, the World Health Organisation (WHO) does consider cell phone radiation to be possibly carcinogenic to humans, other things that are in the same classification are chloroform, lead and pesticide DDT.

Recently, WHO also claimed around one billion young people are exposed to unsafe levels of sound through headphones leading to hearing loss. According to one of their researchers: as they go about their daily lives doing what they enjoy, more and more young people are placing themselves at risk of hearing loss.

Few months back, the other study published in the journal Current Biology explained that using a smartphone for one day has transformative impact on the brain. That study finds how smartphones are affecting the electrical activity in the brain. The electrical activity in a smartphone user's brain spikes when their fingertips are touched, in comparison to an old-school phone user.

Watching at the small fonts can lead to eyestrain, blurred vision, dizziness and dry eyes. Light blues from these cell phones are also disturbing and changing sleep pattern. According to some experts, you may make your phone's font size bigger and try to hold your phone at least 16 inches away from your faces and every few minutes look up from your screen at something far away for short breaks and don't forget to blink.

The benefits of reducing smartphone use seem clear. Unplugging from social media site notifications can reduce stress and add to time spent with healthy affairs.

HEALTH bulletin

World Kidney Day 2015

Kidney health for all



EMRAN BIN YUNUS

The second Thursday of March of every year is observed World Kidney Day (WKD) with a theme. The theme of 2015 was *Kidney Health For All*, an audacious but simple to execute at the beginning. Without timely and proper management ultimate outcome of kidney diseases is either irreversible Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) ending in End Stage Kidney Failure (ESKF) or Acute Kidney Insult (AKI).

Dialysis and Transplantation (D&T) are labeled as gift-of-life (GOF) management for both ESKF and AKI patients as any one of these provides a meaningful life to the victims, otherwise death is the only fate. D&T for ESKF are highly demanding of cost, technology and skill, and recurring affair. ESKF and AKI are the ultimate complications of common diseases like diabetes, hypertension, obstruction of urinary tract, infections, nephritis, drug abuse, febrile illness, diarrhoea, pregnancy, surgical complications, trauma, congenital anomalies and many others. Some of them are not

primarily kidney diseases.

A rule-of-thumb observation reveals at any given time 10% of any population have early markers of kidney diseases, of which 10% may develop CKD over 10 years, and 10% of them may end up over another 10 years in ESKF and may need D&T, the Alarming Rule-of-Ten (AROT). Not to overlook that only 10% of patients can afford or access to D&T and 10% of them can continue more than 10 months, the Frustrating Rule-of-Ten (FROT).

In a country of 150 million people, projection of this AROT is indicative of an insurmountable situation and FROT a great humanitarian disaster. So the theme of this year WKD is very pertinent. To ensure *Kidney Health For All*, there is a need of comprehensive concerted dynamic collaborative endeavor for preventive measures vis a vis rehabilitation of those who are already victims.

It is interesting that in some instances prevention for kidney disease may be the appropriate management of some common diseases in tandem for example diabetes, hypertension etcetera.

In our country, as the situation is worse, a dynamic social movement is necessary to consolidate the perceived need and customise the attitude for sharing and sacrifice followed by advocacy for a national

law to develop, manage, collect and collate scattered resources and operate the fund to support ESKF patients.

This can be done by nominal levies on some services and trades. For example, there are 80 plus million cell phones in operation. Assuming one call per cell phone per day and adding one paisa per call every day, it will amount to Tk. 800,000, which is around Tk. 300,000,000 in a year. The actual figure will be much more. Established by national law, a ESKF National Support Commission may be entrusted to do the needful.

On own initiative doing two simple tests, serum creatinine and urine protein can reveal whether kidney is in health or not, preferably annually in asymptomatic persons. With other diseases one should insist the doctor to do these tests. Creatinine will tell about kidney function and urine protein about the structure.

Noteworthy that in early at reversible state kidney abnormality in most diseases will not produce any symptom to take care and thereby so doing may lead to prevention of the ultimate maladies in most instances. May be it is the appropriate reflection of kidney health for all.

The writer is an Internist & Nephrologist. E-mail: ebyunus@yahoo.com



South Africans perform first successful penis transplant

The 21-year-old recipient, whose identify is being protected, lost his penis in a botched circumcision, reports BBC.

Doctors in Cape Town said the operation was a success and the patient was happy and healthy. There have been attempts before, including one in China.

Surgeons at Stellenbosch University and Tygerberg Hospital performed a nine-hour operation to attach a donated penis.

The team used some of the techniques that had been developed to perform the first face transplants in order to connect the tiny blood vessels and nerves.

The operation took place on 11 December last year. Three months later doctors say the recovery has been rapid.

Full sensation has not returned and doctors suggest this could take two years.



/StarHealthBD

Knowing for better living

Every year, **6 million** people die from stroke

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



In Search of Excellence

www.orionpharmabd.com

ORION Pharma Ltd. Dhaka, Bangladesh