

Another step forward towards saving children

Bangladesh introduced vaccine against Pneumonia in the national immunisation programme

DR TAREQ SALAHUDDIN

Bangladesh has introduced the Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) in their Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI). It was officially declared yesterday at a launching event held at Dhaka Shishu Hospital.

Pneumonia is an inflammatory condition of the lung affecting primarily the microscopic air sacs known as alveoli. It is usually caused by infection with bacteria (most common), viruses and some other reasons.

The vaccine which will be available in EPI schedule of Bangladesh is a vaccine effective only against 10 serotypes of bacteria causing Pneumonia, whereas there are approximately 50 other serotypes. But this vaccine will provide almost 50% coverage against the most prevalent Pneumonia cases.

This means by introducing the vaccine, Pneumonia will not be eliminated completely, but the mortality and morbidity will be decreased by a great extent. As the Pneumonia causing bacteria also cause Meningitis, the vaccine will also be effective to reduce the number of Meningitis cases.



"This is a great achievement of the Government of Bangladesh — they introduced Hib vaccine in last tenure and brought Pneumonia vaccine this time."

Prof Samir Saha

Prof Samir Saha, Head of Department of Microbiology and Executive Director of Child Health Research Foundation (CHRF) said "This is a great achievement of the Government of Bangladesh — they introduced



Hib vaccine in last tenure and brought Pneumonia vaccine this time."

Prof Saha, who is also a member of Pneumococcal

Awareness Council of Experts (PACE) expressed, "This is the second vaccine which has been introduced completely based on the evidence from this country. But the evidence already generated from Bangladesh is not

enough. We all should be vigilant to see how the non vaccine serotypes behave in near future." He also informed that they will further work on monitoring the impact of the vaccine.

HEALTH bulletin



PHOTO: BBC

New global fund to help countries defend tobacco control

A new global fund is being launched to help developing countries fend off challenges to tobacco control measures by cigarette makers, reports BBC.

The \$4m (£2.7m) fund is a joint effort by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

They say tobacco control gains are being put at risk by the industry's use of trade agreements and litigation.

But tobacco companies argue they are protecting investments, including intellectual property rights.

The fund has been launched in Abu Dhabi at an international conference on tobacco control.

Mr Gates added: "Country leaders who are trying to protect their citizens from the harms of tobacco should not be deterred by threats of costly legal challenges from huge tobacco companies."

Both philanthropic organisations hope the initial investment will grow, with other donors joining the effort.

Prenatal diagnosis and Thalassaemia

PROF WAQAR A KHAN

Thalassaemia is the most common congenital disorder in Bangladesh. Treatment facilities are limited due to high cost of drugs and limited availability of blood for transfusion. As treatment is expensive and lifelong, many children with the disease die in their teens. It is not possible in a country like Bangladesh to provide treatment due to limited resources.

Prevention of births of thalassaemic children is the best solution. But prevention of births of thalassaemic children by creating awareness, dissuasion of marriage between carriers or identify carrier couples before marriage and to offer counselling to separate has not been very successful.

Prenatal diagnosis and abortion of affected fetus has been most successful in preventing the births of thalassaemic children. Prenatal diagnosis is the way to know before birth whether the fetus has thalassaemia or not. All over the world the focus is now to prevent the births of thalassaemic children by prenatal diagnosis.

In preventing the births of thalassaemic children, prenatal diagnosis is done for determining the status of fetus of whether s/he is a normal, carrier or thalassaemic. It is done by two methods described here.



Blood transfusion is crucial for survival of thalassaemia patients.

Chorionic villus sampling

A small sample is obtained from the developing placenta which has the same genetic make up as the fetus. The tissue from the placenta is obtained by means of a needle inserted through the abdominal wall under ultrasound guidance. A small amount of chorionic villi material is aspirated. The technique can be used at any stage from 11 weeks onwards.

CVS is preferable as it is done in the first trimester of pregnancy within the limits laid down by abortion law in many countries. It also reduces the

emotional stress associated with late pregnancy diagnosis where there are complications.

Amniocentesis

Amniocentesis is analysis of amniotic fluid. This procedure is normally done after 16th weeks of pregnancy. The procedure is aspiration of about 15-20 ml of fluid from the amniotic cavity surrounding the fetus through the help of a small needle inserted through the abdomen under ultrasound guidance.

The main disadvantage in this method is the lateness of the procedure and diagnosis. Abortion here is psychologically traumatic to the mother.

After collection of sample, DNA analysis is done to determine whether the fetus is affected, carrier or normal. If the fetus is affected which means that s/he will be born with thalassaemia the choice is with the parents to abort or carry on with the pregnancy.

Dhaka Shishu Hospital Thalassaemia Center has recently started a DNA lab analysis of chorionic villus and amniotic fluid sample to detect the status of fetus where the parents are carriers of the thalassaemia.

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HAVE A NICE DAY

The voice of harmony



Dr Rubaiul Murshed

One of the major factors for a healing environment is our voice expressions. Bad speaking habit will obstruct to make a healthy lifestyle from a young age. It is said that 90 per cent of life's friction is due to the tone of voice. Verbal abuse (blaming, shaming and shouting) triggers domestic violence as well. This proves absence of love and trust.

But if these frictions are not dealt with in a healthy way, it can have a significant effect on your daily lifestyle and mental well-being. If you are angry, practice to tell people that 'you are feeling angry and explain why' — but softly and clearly. Talking softly, on the other hand is harmonising to develop qualities like a listening attitude and looking inwards.

When you speak loudly, your body feels tired and your thoughts are less focused. Our bodies are designed to handle calm situations and also exciting ones. By shouting you are provoking other people to get excited. As if when you are shouting, you are saying 'why don't you say something!' and others' brain is shouting back either with loud voice or stressed voice (in case of subordinates and small children).

In fact when you are in the middle of something scary or challenging, your calmness and low pitched voice can handle the situation much better. Well if it is involuntary and unintentional and you are suffering from voice problems or mental illnesses. Please consult a doctor for determining whether you need to be referred to an ENT specialist or Psychiatrist for further diagnosis and treatment.

Otherwise please follow the following points to make the life peaceful and enjoyable for everyone:

- Do not whisper or speak too loudly and pause appropriately
- Have sufficient night-sleep and keep a light mood — not 'hyper'
- Make requests rather than demands or 'taken for granted'
- Good communication can help you get your point across
- If someone provokes/upsets you — react keenly after 24-48 ours

Let's end this article with a 'Quranic verse': "Be moderate in your speed, and lower your voice, for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of an ass".

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Rapid blood test to 'cut antibiotic use'

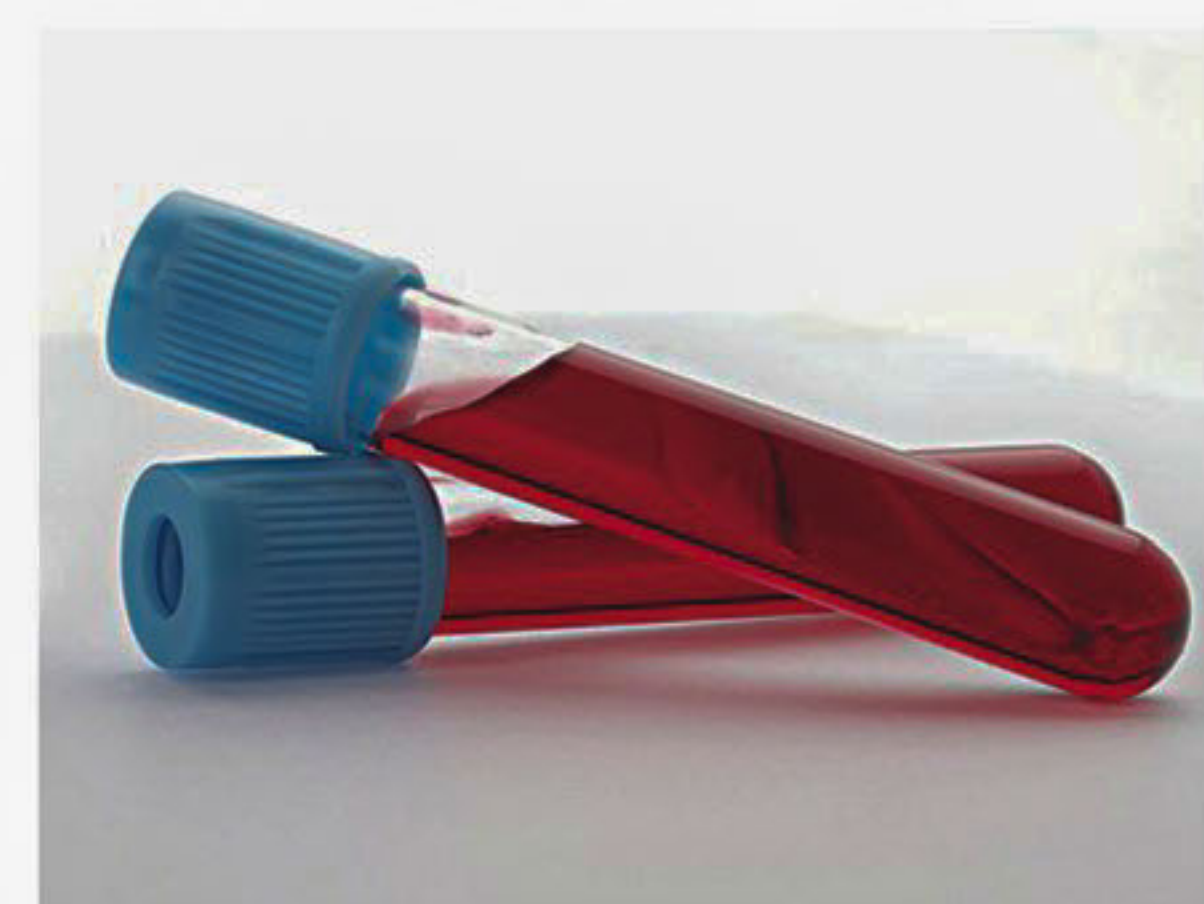


PHOTO: BBC

A new blood test can help doctors tease out whether an infection is caused by a virus or bacteria within two hours, research in Plos One suggests.



/StarHealthBD

Knowing for better living

Every year, **5 million** people suffer from permanent disability due to stroke

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



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