

Vitamin D Deficiency

# An old problem yet to be solved

DR MD SALIM SHAKUR

Abrar Ali (not a real name), a 12-year old boy and the captain of volleyball team of his school who takes regular exercise in his basement found that his arms and legs were constantly aching. Visiting his paediatrician revealed that his body lacked vitamin D from blood test. He was prescribed vitamin D and advised to do exercise under sunlight which relieved his pain.

Vitamin D helps to build and maintain bone health. Our body find it difficult to absorb calcium and phosphate from food or supplement without it. But when that happens, bones become brittle and cause pain.

Rickets causing bony deformity is a clinical expression of extreme vitamin D deficiency and represent only the tip of iceberg of huge vitamin D deficiency in children and women, particularly in the developing world. Vitamin D deficiency affects bone health of children and adolescent girls in developing countries. They may not reach pick bone mass as mature adult and they are at risk of osteoporotic fractures at later life. Vitamin D deficiency is also associated with other diseases like type 2 Diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, SLE, Rheumatoid arthritis, breast and colon cancer etc.



**Children should be allowed to spend an hour in the sun to prevent deficiency of vitamin D**

Sunlight is the major source of vitamin D, while diet provides less than 10% of body requirement. Children living in sunny countries like Bangladesh are vulnerable to vitamin D deficiency due to

- Dark pigmented skin synthesises ten times less vitamin

D from sunlight

- Adolescent girls of many Asian and African have inadequate sunlight exposure due to covering clothes for cultural and religious reasons
- Such women carry low vitamin D status throughout their fertility life, pregnancy and

lactating period

- Infants of such women receive less vitamin D from their mother during fetal life and also from mother's milk
- Many urban children do not get enough time for sun exposure either in school (due to lack of playground) or in residence (due

to surrounding high rise buildings in cities)

- High air pollution in cities cut off UV radiation leading to inadequate synthesis of vitamin D

**How to prevent calcium and vitamin D deficiency?**

- Education regarding availability of vitamin D (sunlight exposure of at least 10% exposed skin for 30 -45 minutes)
- Vitamin supplement to exclusively breast fed child particularly of dark skinned mother and child with inadequate exposure to sunlight and other vulnerable group.
- School children should be allowed to spend an hour in sun
- Outdoor exposure of sunlight of children, adolescent and women under privacy if required
- Fortification of milk and food grains is the way forward
- Intake of calcium rich diet such as milk and dairy products like cheese, yogurt, crushed fish bone (grinded) should be encouraged to offer to children.
- Calcium supplement should be taken either on an empty stomach or hours before or after food rich in carbohydrate (wheat, flour, rice etc).

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HAVE A NICE DAY

## Beauty & the beast-1



Dr Rubaiul Murshed

There are two types of people. One group (short tempered) gets angry so easily. The other group becomes angry due to genuine traumatic events and high levels of stress. Many people those who cannot 'hold in' their anger suffers from simple vomiting to stroke leading

to paralysis and death. Sometimes people become inhuman when they lost their temper. In contrast, a small group is interestingly habituated with anger and quarrelling. Out-of-control anger makes people cruel like beast and hurts their physical and mental health. Chronic anger makes you more prone to heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol levels, a weakened immune system, insomnia and high blood pressure. Eventually it ends ones' career.

Anger often started from our own homes. If we watch others in our family to shout, hit each other, or throw things, one might think this is how anger is supposed to be expressed. Ignorance and strong heads can make you more susceptible to anger.

Research shows that anger can increase people's (especially men's) chances of developing coronary heart disease and having worse outcomes if they already have heart disease. This can also lead to stress-related problems, such as insomnia, digestive problems and headaches.

One study says that cognitive-behavioural therapy improved people's control of their anger and reduced their hostility, aggression and depression. Watching harmful movies and difficult environment with tricky companions change normal people bit by bit.

Some people with weak personalities use their anger usually to children, gentle partners, feeble citizens and helping hands as a part of their demanding natures. They can solve this problem smoothly by change their demands into requests.

Be willing to forgive; it is said that people with narrow mentality hesitate to forgive people. Using small words like *excuse me* or *please* are often useful. Even if you are in a relationship with a hot-tempered partner with a short fuse or find yourself getting into frequent arguments and fights? There are ways.

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## HEALTH bulletin

# Caesarean sections only if medically necessary

STAR HEALTH DESK

Caesarean section is one of the most common surgeries in the world, with rates continuing to rise, particularly in high- and middle-income countries. Although it can save lives, caesarean section is often performed without medical need, putting women and their babies at-risk of short- and long-term health problems. A new statement from the World Health Organisation (WHO) underscores the importance of focusing on the needs of the patient, on a case by case basis, and discourages the practice of aiming for "target rates".

Caesarean section may be necessary when vaginal delivery might pose a risk to the mother or baby — for example due to prolonged labour, foetal distress, or because the baby is presenting in an abnormal position. However, caesarean sections can cause significant complications, disability or death, particularly in settings that lack the facilities to conduct safe surgeries or treat potential complications.

**International use of Robson classification**

The lack of a standardised internationally-accepted classification



PHOTO: TAREQ SALARUDDIN

system to monitor and compare caesarean section rates in a consistent and action-oriented manner is one of the factors that has hindered a better understanding of this trend. WHO proposes adopting the Robson classification as an internationally applicable caesarean section classification system.

The Robson system classifies all women admitted for delivery into one of 10 groups based on character-

istics that are easily identifiable, such as number of previous pregnancies, whether the baby comes head first, gestational age, previous uterine scars, number of babies and how labour started. Using this system would facilitate comparison and analysis of caesarean rates within and between different facilities and across countries and regions.

Source: World Health Organisation

## How can the burden of diabetes be reduced?

Simple lifestyle measures have been shown to be effective in preventing or delaying the onset of type 2 diabetes. To help prevent type 2 diabetes and its complications, people should:

- achieve and maintain healthy body weight;
- be physically active – at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity activity on most days. More activity is required for weight control;
- eat a healthy diet of between 3 and 5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day and reduce sugar and saturated fats intake;
- avoid tobacco use – smoking increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Early diagnosis can be accomplished through relatively inexpensive blood testing. Treatment of diabetes involves lowering blood glucose and the levels of other known risk factors that damage blood vessels. Tobacco use cessation is also important.

Interventions that are both cost saving and feasible in developing countries include:

- moderate blood glucose control;
- blood pressure control;
- foot care.
- screening and treatment for retinopathy (which causes blindness);
- blood lipid control (to regulate cholesterol levels);
- screening for early signs of diabetes-related kidney disease.

These measures should be supported by a healthy diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a normal body weight and avoiding tobacco use.

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## Being overweight reduces dementia risk

Being overweight cuts the risk of dementia, according to the largest and most precise investigation into the relationship. The researchers admit they were surprised by the findings, which run contrary to current health advice.

The analysis of nearly two million British people, in the Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology, showed underweight people had the highest risk.

Dementia charities still advised not smoking, exercise and a balanced diet.

Dementia is one of the most pressing modern health issues. The number of patients globally is expected to treble to 135 million by 2050.

There is no cure or treatment, and the mainstay of advice has been to reduce risk by maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Yet it might be misguided.



## 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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