



## SPOTLIGHT

# Common Gynecological and Breast Cancer Prevention and Treatment

On 4 July The Daily Star hosted a round table discussion and seminar on "Common Gynecological and Breast Cancer Prevention and Treatment" with Dr See Hui Ti, Senior Consultant, Medical Oncology, Parkway Cancer Centre, as the chief guest. The event was organised by Parkway Cancer Centre Singapore.

The event started off with a presentation on breast and gynecological cancer by Dr Ti. She began with a frightening thought that we all have a 1 in 3 chance of getting cancer, but with regular checkups and proper treatment, one can lead a good cancer free life. Nowadays, gynecological cancer in Bangladesh has taken the back seat with cervical cancer occurring at a 26 percent prevalence rate. Ti ensures us that in the coming future it will decrease even further. But with every piece of good news there is a bad one. Breast cancer is at an all-time high. And it does not look like slowing down any time soon. It occurs with an alarming 32.8 percent prevalence and Ti says it is expected to rise even further.

So why is it that breast cancer is occurring more frequently? Dr Ti's instant reaction is to point at the iftar we were all enjoying. Diet is the most prominent factor in breast cancer. With increasing weight one's chance of developing breast or cervical cancer rises. Cutting down on sugar and fatty foods is a must if you want to reduce your chances. Exercise is also high up on that list.

But most importantly regular checkups must be performed at least once every two years. Put aside your fear of doctors for one day and get this ticked off your list. To check for breast cancer regular self-examination is recommended as well. But this does not mean you don't have to go to a professional.

Sadly even if you do everything right, sometimes cancer is just in your blood. Though with checkups it can be caught

early and taken care of before something serious occurs. A person with a family history of cancer on one side has a higher risk of cancer at 28.1 percent. But those with cancer on both sides have a lower chance.

For breast cancer there are a number of signs to look out for. Some of the most symptoms include lumps in the breast or underarm, thickening or swelling of part of the breast, irritation or dimpling in breast skin, redness or flaky skin, nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood, any

reliable. So mammograms are an absolute necessity when it comes to check ups.

Treatments include surgery, hormonal or biological or radiation therapy or chemotherapy. Most women fear that treatments or even screening tests can physically alter one's breasts. Dr Ti assures us that this most treatments do not alter the breast.

Mastectomy though very effective is an older procedure and not always necessary. Lymph node clearance on the other hand does not require removal of the breasts. If a

cer. HPV (Human papillomavirus infection) is a common virus that is transmitted during sex. It is one of the main factors but be aware that most women get HPV at some point in their lives. But sometimes it can lead to cancer.

Two screening tests which is required to check for cervical cancer is pap test and HPV test. The pap test is recommended for all women between the ages of 21 and 65 years old, and can be done in a doctor's office or clinic. The types of treatment for cervical cancer are surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

When cancer starts in the ovaries, it is called ovarian cancer. Women have two ovaries that are located in the pelvis, one on each side of the uterus. The ovaries make female hormones and produce eggs. All women are at risk for ovarian cancer, but older women are more likely to get the disease than younger women. About 90 percent of women who get ovarian cancer are older than 40 years of age, with the greatest number of cases occurring in women aged 60 years or older.

Some of the symptoms include abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge, pain in the pelvic or abdominal area, back pain, bloating or an abnormal change in your bathroom habits. Unfortunately the screening for ovarian cancer is very different and pap smears do not work. The best option to check for this cancer is to pay attention to your body and if anything seems out of place contact a doctor immediately. Treatments include surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

Dr. Ti ended the conference by urging all women to get their check-ups done. Trying to save money by neglecting your tests are meaningless seeing as how the cost for treatment is much greater and can easily be prevented by going for checkups.

By Daneesha Khan

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed



change in the size or the shape of the breast or pain in any area of the breast. If you are experiencing one or more symptoms it is best to contact a doctor straight away.

A mammography, which is an X-ray of the breast is the most accurate way to catch breast cancer. Other methods of screening are medical or self examination of the breast. But these examinations are not very

removal of the breast is done then reconstruction is recommended to be done right away to maximize the aesthetic result.

The rate of cervical cancer is going down and Dr Ti hopes at in 5 years it might even be eradicated. Some of the common risk factors include smoking, HIV, having to give birth more than three times. Proper protection during sex is a must to prevent cervical can-