

16,000 children under 5 years old die each day

Child mortality rates plunge by more than half since 1990 But global MDG target missed by wide margin

STAR HEALTH DESK

Child mortality rates have plummeted to less than half of what they were in 1990, according to a new report. Under-five deaths have dropped from 12.7 million per year in 1990 to 5.9 million in 2015. This is the first year the figure has gone below the 6 million mark.

New estimates in Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report 2015 released by UNICEF, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Bank Group, and the Population Division of UNDESA, indicate that although the global progress has been substantial, 16,000 children under five still die every day. And the 53 per cent drop in under-five mortality is not enough to meet the Millennium Development Goal of a two-thirds reduction between 1990 and 2015.

The report notes that the biggest challenge remains in the period at or around birth. A massive 45 per cent of under-five deaths occur in the neonatal



period – the first 28 days of life. Prematurity, pneumonia, complications during labour and delivery, diarrhoea, sepsis, and malaria are leading causes of deaths of children under 5 years old. Nearly half of all under-five deaths are associated with undernutrition.

However, most child deaths are easily preventable by proven and readily available interventions.

The rate of reduction of child mortality can speed up considerably by concentrating on regions with the highest levels and ensuring a targeted focus on newborns.

"We know how to prevent unnecessary newborn mortality. Quality care around the time of childbirth including simple affordable steps like ensuring early skin-to-skin contact,

exclusive breastfeeding and extra care for small and sick babies can save thousands of lives every year," noted Dr Flavia Bustreo, Assistant Director General at WHO. "The Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, to be launched at the UN General Assembly this month, will be a major catalyst for giving all newborns the best chance at a

healthy start in life."

The report highlights that a child's chance of survival is still vastly different based on where s/he is born.

Among the report's findings:

- Roughly one-third of the world's countries – 62 in all – have actually met the MDG target to reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds, while another 74 have reduced rates by at least half.

- The world as a whole has been accelerating progress in reducing under-five mortality – its annual rate of reduction increased from 1.8 per cent in 1990-2000 to 3.9 per cent in 2000-2015.

- 10 of the 12 low income countries which have reduced under-five mortality rates by at least two-thirds are in Africa.

- 5 in 10 global under-five deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa and another 3 in 10 occur in Southern Asia.

- 45 per cent of all under-five deaths happen during the first 28 days of life. 1 million neonatal deaths occur on the day of birth, and close to 2 million children die in the first week of life.

HAVE A NICE DAY

Killing our egos - 1



Dr Rubaiul Murshed

"S/he is so egoistic!" or "thinks too big of him/herself!" — these statements of disregard indicate one's arrogance. The satire of life is that whoever said it is probably full of superiority too. But can't we take some free time when nobody is around and ask ourselves — "Am I really arrogant or egoistic? Do we show pride while talking and are we not compassionate to others?"

Pride hidden inside ultimately builds up 'ego'. Ego is enough to make you hated and it is the best requirement to destroy any friendship. According to researchers, ego (narcissistic personality) is one of the top ten controversial psychiatric disorders. Some experts suggest it is time to reveal a strong and compelling connection to the rise of mental illness and the development of the modern ego.

What is ego? It is a concept of disrespecting others willingly or unwillingly, making rational people irritated and inflated beyond reality. Humans are social animals. We learn most of our team skills at home like listening, shouting etc.

Research has shown that generally ordinary people remember only 20% of what they hear. It is more applicable for egoistic people as sometimes they do not want to listen at all. While it is too much to expect to change others, we can certainly reduce our own ego. At the end of the day, by reducing ego, one can get a deep and lasting sense of comfort in life. That is why in everyone's lifestyle this topic should come as a top priority for happiness.

Try to show peak performance rather than winning - that frees one from ego. And be a good human being which is a challenge in one's life. In some cases, egos expand with achievement. Ego is an invisible bubble that likes flattery and dislikes value criticism.

E-mail: rubaiulmurshed@gmail.com

HEALTH bulletin

Nutrition in pregnancy

PROF M KARIM KHAN

Though pregnancy is a physiologic process, yet some additional nutrients like vitamins and micro-nutrients are to be added in daily diet of an expectant mother for the wellbeing of the baby and mother.

Local, less costly and easily available food is enough to accommodate the extra need during pregnancy. Simply two extra table spoonful of rice, one table spoon of lentils, a bit extra fat, some fresh vegetables, a few fruits like banana, guava, grapes etc. and occasionally a healthy measure of protein and if possible a cup of milk is sufficient to provide nutrition to the mother and the baby in her womb. This nutritional advice is to be given while the mother comes for her antenatal check up.

Pregnancy is associated with physiologic changes that results in increased plasma volume, red blood cells and decreased concentrations of circulating nutrient-binding proteins and micronutrients.

In many developing countries, these physiologic changes can be aggravated by undernutrition, leading to micronutrient deficiency states such as anaemia that can have disastrous consequences for both the mother and child.

Multiple micronutrients are often taken by pregnant women in developed countries, but their benefits are limited, except for prophylactic folic acid taken during the periconceptional period.



Other than vitamin A, most of the vitamins and minerals are safe in pregnancy. Excess vitamin A can cause some harm to the baby. If the mother is quite healthy and no deficiency of nutrients is there other than folic acid, nothing else is required.

Folic acid is to be started one month prior to pregnancy and has to continue at least for the first three months of pregnancy to avoid neural tube defect (birth defects of the brain, spine, or spinal cord).

Vitamin D and calcium are important and it is better to be taken in the first trimester. Supplementation of zinc, magne-

sium and iodine is usually not needed. Simple regular healthy family diet contains these micronutrients.

We know only a healthy mother can give birth to a healthy baby. So we have to take care of the pregnant women for the betterment of the future generation. Husbands, in laws and other family members should come forward to help the expectant mother not only in case of nutritional aspect but in all other aspects. United comprehensive approach is necessary in every pregnancy.

The author works at Community Based Medical College, Mymensingh. E-mail: mmukhan@gmail.com



Implant traps spreading cancer cells

A small sponge-like implant that can mop up cancer cells as they move through the body has been developed by US researchers. So far tested, it is hoped the device could act as an early warning system in patients, alerting doctors to cancer spread.

The implant also seemed to stop rogue cancer cells reaching other areas where new tumours could grow. The findings appear in Nature Communications.

Cancer Research UK said nine in 10 cancer deaths were caused by the disease spreading to other areas of the body.

About 5 mm (0.2 in) in diameter and made of a "biomaterial" already approved for use in medical devices, the implant has so far been tested in mice with breast cancer.

Experiments showed that implanting the device in either the abdominal fat or under the skin sucked up cancer cells that had started to circulate in the body.

Nutrition Tips

Foods that cleanse the liver

When we overeat or eat processed or fried foods, and, anytime we are exposed to environmental pollutants or stress, the liver becomes overworked and overloaded. When the liver is taxed, it can't process toxins and fat in an efficient way. There are many foods that can help cleanse the liver naturally by stimulating its natural ability to clean toxic waste from the body.

This list is a little more specific and focuses mainly on foods that can help cleanse your liver.



/StarHealthBD

Oral Cancer Prevalence in Bangladesh

Deaths	%	Rate	World Rank
14,812	2.03	14.15	2

Sign & Symptoms

- A sore that doesn't heal
- A lump or thickening of the skin or lining of your mouth
- A white or reddish patch on the inside of your mouth
- Loose teeth
- Poorly fitting dentures
- Tongue pain
- Jaw pain or stiffness
- Difficult or painful chewing
- Difficult or painful swallowing
- Sore throat

Prevention

- Eat variety of fruits and vegetables
- Avoid excessive sun exposure to your lips
- Visit your dentist regularly



ORION
Pharma Ltd.
Dhaka, Bangladesh

