

The 2015 Countdown Report

A decade of tracking progress

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Countdown to 2015 – Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival – launched its 2015 Report on October 19, 2015, at the first Global Maternal & Newborn Health Conference, held in Mexico City.

The 2015 Report, A Decade of Tracking Progress for Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival, includes an updated country profile for each of the 75 Countdown countries, which together account for more than 95% of the world's maternal, newborn, and child deaths.

This final Countdown to 2015 report begins with a summary of results from 2015 based on the data presented in those country profiles, and builds on a companion article that was published simultaneously in The Lancet.

It examines trends in mortality and nutrition; intervention coverage (including inequality); financial flows to reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health; and supportive policy and systems measures. The report then assesses changes in data availability and their implications for program managers and decision makers.

It concludes by turning a critical lens on the Sustainable Development Goals framework and future accountability efforts,



drawing from Countdown's 10 years of monitoring experience.

The 2015 Report shows that, although some health issues and some countries have seen considerable progress, important gaps remain that must not be forgotten in the transition to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Countdown process which started in 2003 leaves mix message for us. The report stocks progress of maternal and child health in 75 countries in the world. The key message is: there has been progress, progress has been accelerated in recent years, the pace of improvement is get-

ting faster but yet there is lot to be done.

According to the report in 2015, experts suggest a particular area of emphasis to put in coming days in inequalities in different indicators.

Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta, Co-chair of Countdown to 2015 informed

that the donors have committed to invest more in countdown process. It will continue in the upcoming years in bigger shape.

Looking at the data from Bangladesh, Dr. Shams El Arefin from ICDDR,B commented, "Bangladesh has done well in most of the indicators, particularly in maternal health, but the progress in coming years will be more challenging. Next milestones will not be as easy as the country has achieved before."

Dr. Shams, an expert worked for Bangladesh country level information, said, "Bangladesh needs to invest more in maternal and child health facilities to achieve the newly set targets those the government of Bangladesh has already committed. Well designed program needs to be implemented, which he commented – not impossible – to achieve next level of target in progress."

Dr. Shams added, "Bangladesh needs to underscore the access to services and quality of services. To ensure the quality of services, we need to improve in human resources and invest in the quality of facilities. It requires long term plan and cannot be achieved overnight."

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HAVE A NICE DAY

The importance of eye pressure



In general people are concerned about their blood pressure. But a lot of us are not aware of eye pressure known as intra-ocular pressure. It usually varies between 10 and 21 mmHg. If the optic nerve comes under high pressure then it can be injured. This injury will depend on the pressure level and how long it has lasted. Sometimes a lower level of pressure can also cause damage more slowly, and eventually the vision would be affected if not properly treated.

Glaucoma is a serious eye disease in which the optic nerve is damaged with loss of vision. As a general rule the damaging pressure is greater than 21 mmHg; but there are some patients who may have damage at lower eye pressures.

In addition to high pressure, risk factors for glaucoma include family history, age, diabetes and ethnicity. Eye specialists are interested to look at other risk factors for glaucoma. Most important among these appear related to blood flow to the eye.

Evidence suggests that ocular perfusion pressure is a strong risk factor for glaucoma. Ocular perfusion pressure is the relationship between the eye pressure and the blood pressure. In fact, blood pressure has an effect on glaucoma, but perhaps not in the way you might think. If the blood pressure is low and especially if the eye pressure is high, blood has difficulty getting into the eye to supply oxygen and important nutrients, and to remove waste products.

Glaucoma does not typically cause pain and many cases of glaucoma go undiagnosed. That is why checking eye pressure is an important part of a complete eye exam and one good reason to get regular check-ups by an experienced and qualified ophthalmologist.

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HEALTH bulletin



Kids need less sugar and more fat

Independent scientists and nutritionists at the Alliance for Natural Health International (ANH-Intl) have recently published new guidelines for healthy eating for children.

The guidelines stress the need to help children to shift from burning carbohydrates as their primary energy source to healthy fats, including ones derived from whole milk products, olive oil, nut and seed oils, coconut oil and intramuscular fats in meat. They also call on dramatic reductions in sugar intake, recent increases in consumption being attributed to misinformed government policies to reduce saturated fats.

Rather than including only 4 food groups like the present UK Department of Health guidelines created by the Children's Food Trust, the Food4Kids guidelines incorporate 8 food groups. The authors say this is to encourage consumption of healthier food groups, in more appropriate ratios. The guidelines also include a food group entitled concentrated nutrients; the aim is to promote increased intake of nutrients in herbs and spices, as well as vitamin D and various minerals.

Interview

Sound environment and friendly relation ensure quality treatment

Recently Prof Dr Kamrul Hassan Khan, Vice Chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), talked to Shahnoor Wahid and Sohel Rana of The Daily Star about a number of issues concerning BSMMU.

While talking about the present status of medical treatment in the country he emphasised the importance of sound environment and friendly relation among patients, doctors and staff members to ensure quality treatment.

Replying to a question on his objective and dream as a new VC, he replied, "I would like to talk about my background and relation with BSMMU. You know, we fought for the country with dreams some of which are yet to be fulfilled. I joined BSMMU in 1991 when it was known as IPGMR (Institute of Postgraduate Medicine and Research). I was selected as IPGMR secretary in 1997 and got a chance to propose for a Medical University. I made the Draft Act for BSMMU in 1998. The most interesting fact is that we applied on July 24, 1997 and the announcement was made through media on July 31, 1997, within only 7 days. On April 30, 1998 the University Act was finally passed in the parliament.



Prof Dr Kamrul Hassan Khan

In October 2001, the then government attempted to turn it into IPGMR again. But we sternly protested against this decision and stuck to our movement. So I had a close involvement with these two historical events."

Regarding his dream he said, "You might know I have been associated with Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) for 32 years in various capacities. So BMA has a long time professional demand for making it an autonomous body. Autonomy of all medical institutes/colleges is very important for their development. Later on we proposed that all medical colleges both government and non-government and some post graduate institutes should be under an

umbrella of a single university. Unfortunately, this demand was not accepted due to some bureaucratic complications but finally we got BSMMU. I must say we have autonomy in some sectors."

While talking about initiatives taken by him to improve the hospital environment, to strengthen the chain of command and create friendly relationship among patients, doctors and the staffs, he said, "There were some objectives for making a university such as: taking quick decisions and implementing it promptly along with three fundamental tasks taken as mandatory: post-graduate medical education, services to the patients and undertaking research all these are inseparable.

I observe how common people react to the functioning of the medical university and what kind of complaints they raise against university's authority, doctors and staffs. And from the first day of my assignment here I have been doing my homework regarding these issues. You know, being the BSMMU VC makes a great platform for me to work for the impoverished people as well as to render them better treatment. And I am committed to working to change the negative impression about physicians".

Health News

Apollo observes World Stroke Day

Apollo Hospitals Dhaka has joined forces with stroke campaigners around the world on World Stroke Day on the October 29, as part of the global effort to raise awareness of stroke for women.

Globally women run a higher risk of stroke and are more likely than men to die as a result. A stroke happens when the blood supply to part of a person's brain is cut off.

The event provided an intensive discussion on advanced treatments and prevention methods for stroke, including 24-hour thrombolytic therapy, which is performed only at Apollo Hospitals Dhaka.

Medtronic to organise a cardiovascular summit in Dhaka

A summit on cardiovascular diseases titled *Cardiovascular Summit* is going to be held on November 6, 2015 in Hotel Le Meridien, Dhaka, says a press release.

The summit will be organised by Medtronic, a medical services and technology company. Renowned cardiologists from Bangladesh and India are going to participate and discuss different aspects of cardiovascular diseases.

Dr. Fazila-Tun-Nesa-Malik from NICVD Bangladesh, Dr. P. C. Mondal from Apollo Hospital Dhaka and Dr. T. S. Kler from Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, India are one of the keynote speakers of the conference.



Asthma, a respiratory condition marked by spasms in the bronchi of the lungs, causing difficulty in breathing

Symptoms of asthma

Frequent cough, especially at night

Losing your breath easily or shortness of breath

Feeling very tired or weak when exercising

Decreases or changes in lung function as measured on a peak flow meter

Signs of a cold or allergies (sneezing, runny nose, cough, nasal congestion, sore throat and headache)

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