

Hope in the remote Bangladesh

DR TAREQ SALAHUDDIN

Cox's Bazar Women and Children's Hospital — a project of Hope Foundation serves the people living in remotest area of Bangladesh. In some specialised services like fistula operation, they provide tertiary care at free of cost which is even rare in some district level hospitals.

The Cox's Bazar Women and Children's Hospital, which is more known as Hope Hospital started service mainly in maternal and child care. With the support of some donor organisation, it provides with quality care in fistula operation for the women who suffer with their problem in silence.

During a prolong obstructed labour, the baby's head is constantly pushing against the mother's pelvic bone causing tissue to die due to lack of blood flow to this area. All of that pushing creates a hole (a fistula) between the birth passage and an internal organ such as the bladder or rectum. A woman cannot hold her urine, and sometimes bowel content as well. This is a miserable condition whose consequence cannot be described literally.

A woman with fistula is usually rejected by her husband because of her inability to bear more children and her foul smell. She is shunned by her community and forced to live an isolated existence. These women suffer profound psychological trauma resulting from their utter loss of status and dignity, in addition to suffering constantly from their

physical internal injury. Repair of a fistula is time consuming; in most cases the surgery needs to be performed repeatedly to heal a case completely. Moreover, it requires specialised training and skill which are not adequately available in Bangladesh.

The Hope Hospital started fistula repair with the support from Fistula Foundation which now has expanded their services in many folds in different dimensions. The hospital now has a full time available fistula surgeon Dr. Nrinmoy Biswas who got training from Addis Ababa in Ethiopia.

All the fistula operations are done in the hospital at free of cost. They repaired fistula of a woman who suffered for 37 years with the disease. But people hardly know about the services provided in this hospital.

Not only the operation is free, the hospital organises campaigns during the surgery and provides free transport, food, follow up of the identified cases.

While most of the cases require more than one surgery, the hospital authority maintains research protocol and proper follow up of the cases.

In spite of all these services, it is not very easy to get fistula cases. Because, fistula patients are abandoned from their families and the society; they are deprived of support and care.

To encourage patients coming to get the facilities, the hospital organises meeting with the successful cases. These recovered cases further spread in the community and serve as ambassador



Ayesha Begum gave birth to her baby at Hope Hospital.

PHOTO: DR TAREQ SALAHUDDIN

to encourage the patients hiding their problems.

Apart from providing maternal, child and primary health care, they also treat burn cases, cleft lip or palate and provide many other services.

In recent years, the hospital has expanded their safe motherhood project plus, including some more components in the new protocol. They have included free ultrasonogram in four antenatal care and two post natal care to encourage more women to come to hospital. During the antenatal care, they provide with free iron supplementation and folic acid to the women.

The hospital is also running some other good initiatives like training other doctors in fistula repair surgery. Dr. Nrinmoy who is trained form abroad is now training other physicians. Doctors and medical students from abroad also get hands on training from the hospital in different times.

Whereas fistula operation is such so complicated, time consuming and expensive, the hospital is providing an awesome service to the poor people in the remote area. Dr Iftikhar Mahmood, who is the founder of the Hope Foundation said, "We need to spread the message to more people so that they can get the services. It will be particularly helpful for the poor people who otherwise could not afford the service."

E-mail: tareq.salahuddin@thedailystar.net

HAVE A NICE DAY

Facebook: Does it affect our health? - 1



Nowadays social media has taken the human race by storm. Throughout the world Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter etc. are now used by 1 in 4 people. Such activity may seem harmless but scientists advocate this can affect our health (especially mental) and happiness.

A recent study, from the University of Michigan, found that using Facebook may even make people's life miserable. Of course one of the major benefits for linking to the internet is the capacity to better connect with the people around us. Facebook's mission statement is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.

Well, we all have our own reasons for using Facebook. Some of us like to browse at other people's status and especially pictures, while some use the social media as a way to ventilate their emotions. But according to a Benedictine University study, one of the main reasons we use social media is for self-distraction and monotony relief. It is now well established about the hazards of the 'blue lights' - released from computers, tablets or Smartphone's. This suppresses the secretion of body's melatonin, which will keep one awake at night.

According to Dr S Rauch and her team from Benedictine University, it is not purely the use of social media that is getting out of control, but our need to be electronically connected at all times. She adds, "I think parents should be aware that their adolescent children are living at a time where they are constantly 'online' and connected. I would encourage any parent to explore ways to encourage or even mandate 'off' time, not just away from social media sites, but away from the devices." Certainly that is a good advice for all of us.

E-mail: rubaiulmurshed@gmail.com

HEALTH bulletin



Dieters don't have to banish junk food & soda

A recent study from Cornell University suggests that overweight Americans do not indulge in junk food more often; researchers suspect that eating too much food in general could be more to blame for obesity.

People might not have to swear off junk food and soda to lose weight, according to a study. Researchers found that there was no difference in how often Americans who are normal weight and who are morbidly obese. Overweight and obese Americans did not eat fast-food meals more frequently than the normal weight group.

Don't get too excited — there are still health consequences to what we eat. But this might help people rethink what they cut out when they are trying to cut weight.

World Diabetes Day

Healthy eating and physical activity to reduce diabetic complication

DR MARIJUF MUSTARI

Diabetes is a metabolic disease that occurs due to absolute insulin deficiency (type-1 diabetes) or inadequate insulin secretion or action (type-2 diabetes). Insulin is needed for entry of glucose into the cells after food metabolism which is hampered in diabetes, resulting in increase blood glucose level.

Diabetes, especially the type-2 diabetes is a global epidemic. The largest increase in the number of patients will be in rapidly developing countries like Bangladesh.

The age of onset of diabetes is also decreasing. So more young people of working age group are now affected by diabetes. Like other non communicable diseases, the treatment of diabetes is expensive, because diabetic patients need treatment of diabetes as well as associated other diseases. The increase in diabetes prevalence, especially among young and economically active people is leading to an escalation of health care costs and loss of economic growth.

In response to growing concerns about rapid rise of diabetes around the world, the International



Diabetes Federation (IDF) and World Health Organisation (WHO) celebrate World Diabetes Day every year on November 14.

Rapid nutritional transition and socio-economic development lead to over-nutrition and sedentary lifestyle. Advance technology like working in front of computer for long time, playing video games, watching television etc. keep people away from physical exercise. On the other hand, due to globalisation people are habituated in fast food. Unhealthy lifestyle and unhealthy diet leads to increase in the prevalence of overweight, obesity and type-2 diabetes.

The theme of world diabetes day from 2014 to 2016 is 'Healthy living and diabetes'. According to IDF, a

healthy diet containing leafy vegetables, fresh fruits, nuts, whole grains, lean meat and unsweetened yogurt can help reduce risk of type-2 diabetes and reduce the complication.

Healthy living means healthy eating and exercise. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Physical exercise is also important to control blood glucose along with or without medications and healthy eating. It may be done by brisk walking for 20-30 minutes daily.

Diabetes can be controlled. So we should adopt a healthy lifestyle. But it is not so easy. For this, mass awareness is needed.

The writer is an Endocrinologist at Central Hospital, Dhaka.
E-mail: marufamustari@yahoo.in

Health Tips

Managing an asthma attack in winter

With the onset of winter, patients with asthma often experience some sudden attack. During an asthma attack, also called an asthma exacerbation, the airways become swollen and inflamed. The muscles around the airways contract, causing your breathing (bronchial) tubes to narrow.

The key to stopping an asthma attack is recognising and treating an asthma flare-up early. Follow the treatment plan you worked out with your doctor ahead of time. This plan should include what to do when your asthma starts getting worse, and how to deal with an asthma attack in progress.

All asthma attacks require treatment with a quick-acting (rescue) inhaler.

If your asthma attacks seem to be set off by outside triggers, your doctor can help you learn how to minimise your exposure to them. Allergy tests can help identify your allergic triggers.

Washing your hands frequently can help reduce your risk of catching a cold virus.

If your asthma flares up when you exercise in the cold, it may help to cover your face with a mask or scarf until you get warmed up.

Asthma attacks can be serious. It can interrupt everyday activities such as sleep, school, work and exercise, causing a significant impact on your quality of life — and can disrupt the lives of those around you.

Serious asthma attacks mean you are likely to need trips to the emergency room, which can be stressful and costly.

A very severe asthma attack can lead to respiratory arrest and death.



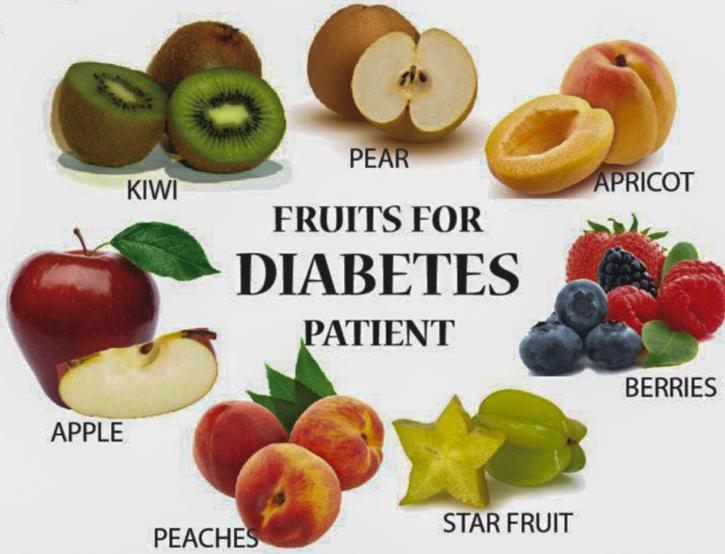
World Diabetes Awareness Month

Risk Factor

- Obesity or being overweight
- Glucose intolerance
- Family history
- Age

Management

- Steps to Take**
- Whatever your risk are, there's a lot you can do to delay or prevent diabetes.
- Manage your blood pressure
 - Keep your weight within or near a healthy range
 - Get 30 minutes of exercise on most days
 - Eat a balance diet



FRUITS FOR DIABETES PATIENT

