

Modern HIV prevention: What's next for women?

STAR HEALTH DESK

Recently, some of the world's leading scientists and researchers gathered in Boston at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI). "What's next for women?" was the question on the minds of many, after results were released from two trials that looked at one of the most promising new HIV prevention tools of our time: the long-acting dapivirine vaginal ring, a female-controlled HIV prevention method that could potentially protect women for up to a month at a time.

ASPIRE (MTN 020) and The Ring Study (IPM 027) looked at the safety and effectiveness of these women-controlled devices; their results were among the most anticipated data to be released at the conference.

The news from CROI was encouraging and potentially far-reaching – trial results found the ring to be effective in preventing HIV infection among women (27% and 31% protection overall among the roughly 4,500 women enrolled in these two studies).

This is truly a major advance for the field of HIV prevention, especially for women. It is clear –



as was the case with oral PrEP – that we need to move quickly to open-label and demonstration projects to understand the real-world impact of this new intervention.

The vaginal ring is one more addition to an already exciting

array of antiretroviral-based biomedical options in the prevention toolbox that has ushered in a new era in HIV prevention. For the first time, a real prevention menu is beginning to take shape.

Despite immense progress in diagnostics and antiretroviral

(ARV) treatment, every year roughly two million people worldwide become newly infected with HIV. The situation is particularly grim for women and young girls in sub-Saharan Africa, where women account for more than half of all people

living with HIV, and the burden of disease continues to increase among young women. Offering a variety of effective prevention approaches to suit diverse needs for diverse populations at different times in their lives is the key to controlling the epidemic, at least until there is a vaccine and a cure.

Interventions that address gender-based violence and the socioeconomic needs of young women must also be part of this comprehensive response. Our focus needs to remain inclusive, involving community mobilization and leadership at all levels. It must also be broad, encompassing the biomedical, behavioural, and structural components of combination prevention while respecting, protecting, and promoting sexual reproductive health and rights.

There is still much more to be done. There is an urgent need to deploy the tools in the right way to the right people. At the same time, we must continue to explore new innovations that will improve and further expand the menu of prevention options for women. The exciting results from ASPIRE and The Ring Study bring new hope in this area.

YOGA

Mindfulness for good health

SHAZIA OMAR

Mindfulness improves mental, psychological and physical health — lowers rates of fatigue and burn out, lowers blood pressure, improves memory, improves sleep, enhances immune system, reduces depression, mood disturbances and anxiety, increases clarity of mind, balance, energy, zest for life and focus.

At work, mindfulness leads to better teamwork, improved emotional intelligence, reduced interpersonal tension, less reactivity, better listening skills and improved ability to communicate clearly, enhanced leadership, better ability to "think out of the box" and enhanced creativity.

To cultivate mindfulness, pay close attention to your breathing, especially when you're feeling intense emotions. Notice — really notice — what you are sensing in a given moment, the sights, sounds, and smells that ordinarily slip by without reaching your conscious awareness.

Recognise that your thoughts and emotions are fleeting and do not define you, an insight that can free you from negative thought patterns. Tune into your body's physical sensations, from the water hitting your skin in the shower to the way your body rests in your office chair.

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HEALTH bulletin



Two-stage injections cause children less pain

Many people are afraid of needles, but children are especially fearful. As a result, dentists are continually looking for ways to make injections less painful and therefore less frightening. Thankfully, new research provides evidence of a promising technique.

The article describing this technique was published in the journal Anesthesia Progress. The authors intentionally focused on children when they sought a way to reduce pain associated with local anesthetic injections during dental work. They tested a two-stage injection technique designed to cause less pain.

Dental disease is one of the most common chronic health problems among children. It accounts for many lost days at school, chronic mouth pain, and difficulty eating. However, putting a child in pain in a dentist's chair and then approaching that child with a needle of anesthetic can lead to tears and tantrums.

They found that by placing a gel anesthetic in the gum area, depositing a small amount of injectable anesthetic, and then waiting 5 minutes, the full injection was far less painful. This two-stage technique resulted in significantly lower pain levels, both reported by the children and observed by the researchers, compared to the pain felt when the conventional technique was used. The authors concluded that the two-stage injection "is a simple and effective means of reducing injection pain in children."

Excessive vitamin A can cause severe damage to the body

PROF DR A F M AMINUL ISLAM

Vitamins are a group of organic compounds that are essential for normal growth and nutrition. They are required in small quantities in diet, because they cannot be synthesised by the body. They aid to the nutrition of the person, but consumption of vitamin alone will not be enough.

Everyone likes to consume nutritious foods like fish, meat, milk, eggs and fruits etc. but many people cannot afford it. But the good thing is many affordable green leafy vegetables contain significant amount of vitamin A. People can eat them and the required dose of vitamin A can be fulfilled. But if excessive amount of vitamin A is consumed by children, it may cause toxicity and also

may cause even death.

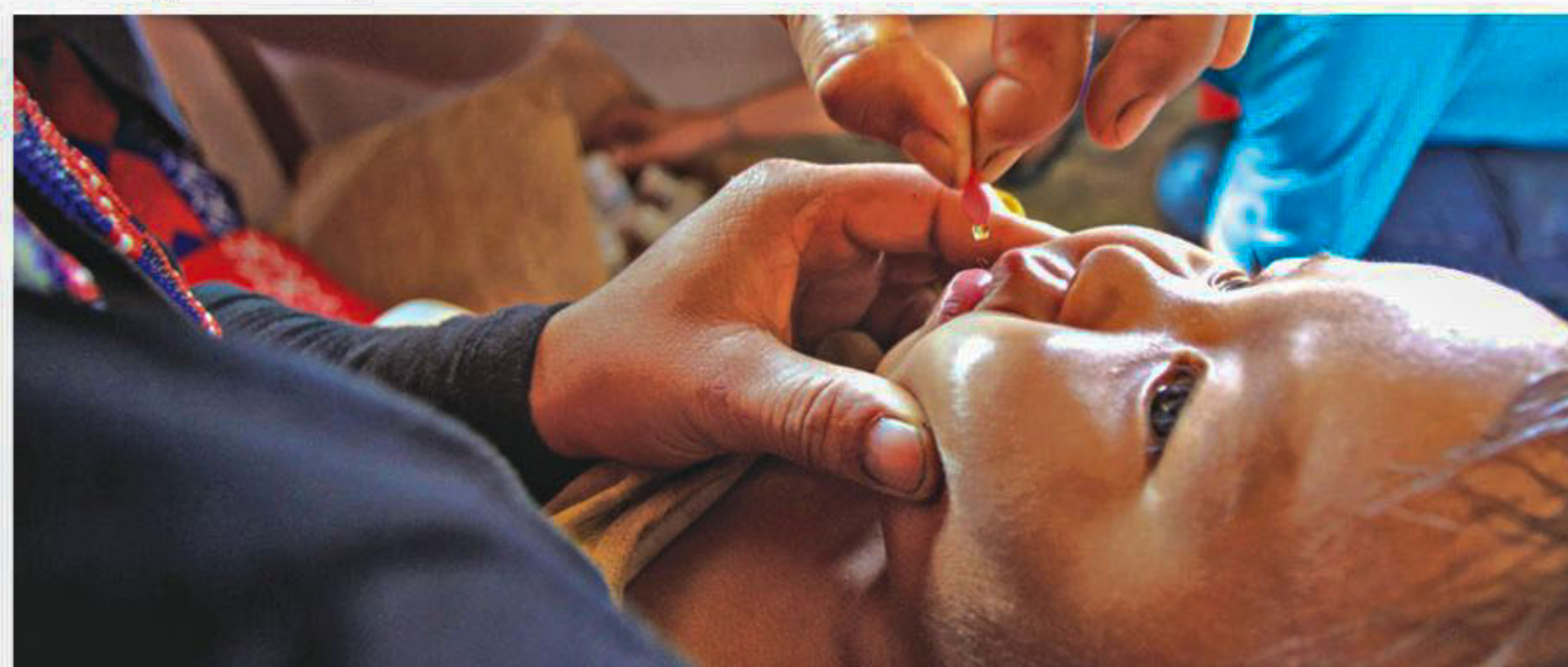
The discovery of vitamin A toxicity and that it can also cause death was first known while investigating the illness and death of explorers in the North Pole who ate livers of polar bear. The investigators noticed that the liver of polar bear contains excessive amount of vitamin A (12 mg/gm).

Everyday intake of 6 mg (20,000 IU) of vitamin A can initiate the vitamin A toxicity within 2 months. Vitamin A plus capsule contains 200,000 IU of vitamin A which can be harmful for children below 5 years of age.

In the North Pole region, the sledge dogs eat the meat of the polar bear but they do not eat the liver because it contains excessive amounts of vitamin A.

Lack of vitamin A can cause night blindness, damage to the cornea (Keratomalacia), drying of eyes (Xerophthalmia) and even can lead to complete blindness. The area which has many cases of night blindness indicates that the people there are suffering from malnutrition and severe lack of vitamin A. Only children from those areas can be provided with 10,000 IU of vitamin A.

In Bangladesh, many people might suffer from malnutrition but not many people may have severe lack of vitamin A which leads to night blindness. This is because even if they do not have meat, fish, milk etc. in their diet, they consume green and colorful vegetables which contain vitamin A.



Health News

Patient awareness on osteoporosis



Labaid Hospital organised a patient awareness programme on osteoporosis in Dhaka by leveraging the slogan — Life is movement, movement is life. Since 2007, Labaid Orthoplasty Center performed over 800 successful hip and knee replacement surgeries.

Training on ASD management



A three training programme on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) management was organised by Institute of Paediatric Neurodisorder and Autism (IPNA) at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU). The aim of the programme was to provide hands-on training for the parents and teachers on how to manage children with ASD.

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TRAVELERS' DIARRHEA is often used as a generic term for any illnesses ranging from an upset tummy to loose stools during or after travel

Symptoms

- Abrupt onset of diarrhea
- Nausea and vomiting
- Bloating
- Urgent need to have a bowel movement
- Malaise (weakness or discomfort)
- Plosive and painful gas
- Cramps
- Loss of appetite
- traveler's diarrhea usually lasts from 3 to 7 days and is rarely life threatening.

Prevention

- Freshly cooked & piping hot food
- Water should be bottled and sealed, or boiled
- No ice cubes while having drink
- While choosing restaurant, always go with the hygiene restaurant & hygiene food service workers

Medication

Pepto-Bismol has been used for a number of years to prevent travelers' diarrhea. Studies show that if adults take the equivalent of two tabs four times a day, it can decrease the incidence of travelers' diarrhea up to 60%. Though it may cause a severe constipation.

