

Prevention & Control of Rabies

# Learning from the cruel death of Fatima

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A schoolgoing child named Fatima who was in class three, died of rabies in August 2, 2016. The father of Fatima went to Upazilla Health Complex; the authority ordered them to leave the facility because this was an infectious ailment and told them that there was no treatment for it. The Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH), Fouzderhat referred her to Infectious Disease Hospital, Dhaka for better treatment. The poor father tried his best to save this girl from the vicious disease. He could not afford the cost of the treatment. So he was supported by his fellow villagers and resorted to 'taking out the poison' from her body. They invited 'Batuni Baidya', a village quack who believes in spiritual power to heal, tried to take the poison out from Fatima's body. The quack tried many harmful practices and ultimately Fatima surrendered to death.

The digital age has not been able to teach us the things what we have to do in this situation. If the people of the village were aware about rabies and its symptoms, Fatima would not have to leave us so early. Fatima is a recent example but thousands of people are passing away in silence.

Rabies is a preventable viral disease. The rabies virus infects the central nervous system and causes disease in the brain. There is no effective treatment and once symptoms start, death is inevitable. The rabies virus is transmitted from infected animals to humans through scratches, bites or licks on mucous membranes of the lips or eyes. The virus cannot be trans-



mitted through intact skin so touching, petting or being close to the animals is not a risk. In addition to dogs, many other animals can transmit rabies.

If preventative treatment is sought promptly, rabies need not be fatal. Immunisation is almost always effective if started within two days of the bite. Chance of effectiveness declines, however, the longer the vaccination is put off. It is important to start immunisation even if it has been weeks or months following a suspected rabid animal bite, because the vaccine can be effective even in these cases. If immunisation does not prove effective or are not received, rabies is nearly always fatal within few days of the onset of symptoms.

According to IDH, the annual number

of rabies related death was 167 in 2006 coming down to only 72 until September, 2014. However there is a large number of rabies death unreported.

A national rabies prevention and control center, established at IDH, receives about 350 to 450 patients with dog bites daily. Anti-rabies vaccines are distributed free of charge from this center. In addition there are 65 rabies prevention and control centers at the district level in Bangladesh.

However, there are many challenges facing the total eradication of rabies. Mass vaccination of 1.2 million dogs has remained as one of them, because massive killing of stray dogs is banned by the Supreme Court in Bangladesh in 2011. Before the writ, the government used to

have plan to massive killing the stray dog but it is stopped.

On this issue Dr. Abu Jamil Faisal, Country Representative of EngenderHealth, Bangladesh recommends the following steps.

**Vaccinate the pets:** one should ensure that one's pets are regularly vaccinated against rabies — it is a legal requirement. Dogs and cats should be given vaccine at 3 months of age, a booster within the following 9 months, and every 3 years thereafter. In high risk areas, yearly vaccinations are recommended. If you are not sure whether your pet has been vaccinated, or if overdue for a vaccine then visit your local veterinarian immediately.

**Avoid being bitten:** Not every bite poses a risk of rabies, but a bite or scratch from a stray animal, sick animal and an animal that is behaving strangely or an unprovoked attack would suggest a rabies risk. Never handle stray animals or animals that appear sick.

**Sterilisation of pets:** Vasectomy is an accepted way to sterilise stray male dogs without impacting hormonal changes. It will prevent the ever growing population of stray dogs. After vasectomy the stray dog should be vaccinated.

If the government takes proper steps to control rabies with the above mentioned steps then unwanted death will decrease, thousands of Fatimas will not face such premature and cruel death and the parents and villagers will not burst into tears.

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## MEDITATION

### Health benefits of deep relaxation

The next time you tune out and switch off and let yourself melt, remind yourself of all the good work the relaxation effect is doing on your body. These are just some of the scientifically proven benefits.

**Increased immunity:** Relaxation appears to boost immunity in recovering cancer patients. A study at the Ohio State University found that progressive muscular relaxation, when practised daily, reduced the risk of breast cancer recurrence.

**Emotional balance:** Emotional balance means to be free of all the neurotic behaviour that results from the existence of a tortured and traumatised ego. This is very hard to achieve fully, but meditation certainly is the way to cure such neurosis and unhealthy emotional states.

**Increased fertility:** A study at the University of Western Australia found that women are more likely to conceive during periods when they are relaxed rather than stressed.

**Relieves irritable bowel syndrome:** When patients suffering from irritable bowel syndrome began practising a relaxation meditation twice daily, their symptoms of bloating, diarrhoea and constipation improved significantly.

**Lowers blood pressure:** A study at Harvard Medical School found that meditation lowered blood pressure by making the body less responsive to stress hormones, in a similar way to blood pressure-lowering medication.

**Anti-inflammatory:** Stress leads to inflammation, a state linked to heart disease, arthritis, asthma and skin conditions such as psoriasis, say researchers at Emory University in the US.

**Calmness:** The simple difference between those who meditate and those who do not, is that for a meditative mind the thought occurs but is witnessed, while for an ordinary mind, the thought occurs and is the boss. So in both minds, an upsetting thought can occur, but for those who meditate it is just another thought, which is seen as such and is allowed to blossom and die, while in the ordinary mind the thought instigates a storm which rages on and on.

## HEALTH bulletin

### Manipulative physiotherapy vs. electrotherapy

### Six nutrients women need the most

#### Asthma pill promising for people with severe symptoms

An experimental pill could help adults with severe asthma, an early study in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine journal suggests.

In the small trial, patients who were given the drug had less inflammation in their airways. And some patients with uncontrolled asthma felt their symptoms improved.

Asthma is a long-term condition that affects the airways in the lungs and can cause a cough, wheezing and breathlessness. For most people the right treatment — for example, inhalers — can help control it, but some people have more persistent symptoms.

In this study, scientists at the University of Leicester looked at 60 patients who had severe asthma despite using steroid inhalers and being seen regularly by specialists.



Every musculoskeletal pain has its own character. Neck or back pain may be acute or chronic. However all pain do not seek treatment — most of them are self-limiting. Musculoskeletal pain that causes mild to severe disability that hound doctors to diagnose the exact cause. For instance, knee pain that limit your movement may cause from various sources.

If the patient is elderly we can primarily diagnose this as osteoarthritis. Just an x-ray of the affected knee joint can confirm the diagnosis. Thus the treatment will be very simple, which is electrotherapy.

Nonetheless, electrotherapy capitulates in the case of nonspecific knee pain. Doctors then go for a differential diagnosis like ligament or meniscus injury or even internal derangement of the knee joint. Manipulative physiotherapy in internal derangement or in mild ligament injury is absolutely golden. Three to seven sessions of manipulation can ease the patient from severe knee pain.

Neck pain sometimes may be stubbornly severe, dogmatic in

character. This type of neck pain may occur all on a sudden.

A patient, 32, was absolutely alright at night but in the morning developed bizarre neck pain. Now she is unable to even turn her neck to the right. However, x-ray showed nothing except little straightening of the cervical column. This could



be of muscular origin. Neck muscles, especially a muscle named 'sternocleidomastoid' can lose its elasticity due to poor posture during sleep and can cause severe pain. Three to four sessions of skilled manipulative therapy can relieve the patient from pain and make him/her feel fit.

A patient aged 60 with diabetes suffering from neck pain for more than three weeks deserves advance

investigation like MRI. Treatment will depend on MRI findings. This case can be managed by electrotherapy. We have a lot of physical equipment in our hand and can use them in proper dose and manner to relieve mild to severe pain.

Musculoskeletal pain can swindle.

Doctors should be shrewder than the pain. Manipulation or electrotherapy can be a powerful weapon to control the pain. It is easy and effective when you will choose right weaponry for the right enemy.

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**Vitamin B6:** Regulates mood, appetite and sleep.  
**Vitamin B12:** Fights fatigue and improves alertness.  
**Folate:** Prevents brain and spinal defects in the first weeks of pregnancy. It also lowers the risk of colon and breast cancer.  
**Vitamin D3:** Strengthens bones, teeth and muscles, protects against autoimmune diseases, breast and ovarian cancer.  
**Calcium:** Reduces symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and maintains blood pressure.  
**Iron:** Needed for proper brain functioning, boosts energy levels and prevents anemia.



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## Psoriasis

Psoriasis signs and symptoms can vary from person to person but may include one or more of the following:

- Red patches of skin covered with silvery scales
- Small scaling spots (commonly seen in children)
- Dry, cracked skin that may bleed
- Itching, burning or soreness
- Thickened, pitted or ridged nails
- Swollen and stiff joints

### Lifestyle and home remedies

Although self-help measures won't cure psoriasis, they may help improve the appearance and feel of damaged skin. These measures may benefit you:

- Take daily baths
- Use moisturizer
- Expose your skin to small amounts of sunlight
- Avoid psoriasis triggers, if possible

### Risk factors

Anyone can develop psoriasis, but these factors can increase your risk of developing the disease:

- Family history
- Obesity
- Viral & bacterial infections
- Smoking
- Stress

