

What ageing ailments are all about?

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Aging is the process of becoming older. In humans, ageing represents the accumulation of changes in a human being over time, encompassing physical, psychological, and social change. Ageing among the known risk factors for most human diseases: of the world's 150,000 people who die each day across the globe, about two thirds die from age-related causes.

As we age, heart rate becomes slightly slower. Blood vessels and arteries become stiffer, causing heart to work harder to pump blood through them. This can lead to high blood pressure and other cardiovascular problems. To keep the heart healthy include physical activity in daily routine. Regular physical activity can help to maintain a healthy weight, lower blood pressure and lessen the extent of arterial stiffening. Eat a healthy diet, quit smoking and manage stress by meditation and sleeping adequately.

With age bones tend to shrink in size and density which weakens them and makes them more susceptible to fracture. Muscles generally lose strength and flexibility, and you might have trouble balancing. To promote bone, joint and muscle health get adequate calcium. Dietary sources of calcium include dairy products, almonds, broccoli and soy products such as tofu. Get adequate amounts of vitamin D. Other than sunlight, sources of vitamin D include oily fish, egg yolk, fortified milk and vitamin D supplement. Walking, jogging and climbing stairs can help you build strong bones and slow bone loss.

Constipation is more common in older adults. To prevent constipation make sure your diet includes high fibre foods like

fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Limit meat that is high in fat, dairy products and sweets. Drink plenty of water and other fluids. Holding in a bowel movement for too long can cause constipation. Regular physical activity can help prevent constipation.

Loss of bladder control or urinary incontinence is common with ageing. Certain medical conditions like diabetes, menopause for women and an enlarged prostate for men might contribute to incontinence. Consider urinating on a regular schedule, such as

every hour. Slowly extend the amount of time between your toilet trips. Do Kegel exercises. Avoid bladder irritants like acidic foods, tea, coffee, alcohol and carbonated beverages which can make incontinence worse.

Memory might naturally become less efficient with age. It might take longer to learn new things or remember familiar words or names. Mentally stimulating activities help keep your brain in shape and might keep memory loss at bay. Social interaction helps ward off depression

and stress, which can help prevent memory loss.

With age, you might have difficulty focusing on objects that are close up. You might become more sensitive to glare and have trouble adapting to different levels of light. Ageing also can cause blurred vision or cataracts. You might face difficulty hearing high frequencies or following a conversation in a crowded room. Wear sunglasses when you are outdoors and use earplugs when you are around loud noises.

Your gums might pull back from your teeth. Certain medications that treat allergies, asthma, high blood pressure and high cholesterol can also cause dry mouth. As a result, teeth and gums might become vulnerable to decay and infection. To promote oral health, brush your teeth twice a day and clean between your teeth using regular dental floss or an interdental cleaner at least once daily.

Remember, it is never too late to adopt a healthy lifestyle. You cannot stop the ageing process, but you might be able to minimise its impact by making healthy choices.

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THALASSAEMIA

Prenatal diagnosis of Thalassaemia

PROF M KARIM KHAN

About a year ago a doctor couple came to my chamber with worried, anxious and frustrated mood. The lady doctor started crying. They were known to me. I requested them to calm down asked what happened. The lady doctor narrated the story.

After a long affair they got married six months ago. Recently, she became pregnant. Both of them were very happy. She told me that they did a check up that day and found that they both were Thalassaemia carrier. She asked worriedly, "Will our baby be Thalassaemia major?"

They asked me if they should choose abortion, which they did not want. I asked them to do chorionic villus biopsies as the pregnancy was eight weeks only. They did that test from India and fortunately the coming baby was also a carrier, not a patient. Subsequently that lady doctor gave birth to a otherwise healthy boy via caesarean section.

Thalassaemia is a congenital hereditary haemolytic anaemia. Where red blood cells (RBC) are broken down due to problem in haemoglobin. There are about 10% carriers in Bangladeshi population. There are many hazards the patients and their families need to bear during the rest of the life.

Avoiding marriage between two carriers only help controlling the disease. Before marriage, do thalassaemia screening to avoid unnecessary hazard. Take care of your kids. Help them giving a normal life.

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HEALTH bulletin



First vaccine to show protection against gonorrhoea

Exposure to the meningococcal group B vaccine during a New Zealand mass vaccination campaign was associated with a reduced likelihood of contracting gonorrhoea, compared with unvaccinated people, according to a new study of nearly 14,000 people published in *The Lancet*. The findings suggest that the vaccine has shown any protection against gonorrhoea, and may provide a new avenue for vaccine development.

If the effect is confirmed in other currently available and similar meningococcal group B vaccines, administering the vaccine in adolescence could result in significant declines in gonorrhoea, which has increasingly become drug resistant.

There are approximately 78 million new cases of gonorrhoea worldwide each year. An increasing number of strains of the bacteria *N. gonorrhoeae* have developed antimicrobial resistance to all drugs recommended for treatment. Untreated, gonorrhoea can lead to complications of infection, such as pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy, and infertility, and the infection can facilitate the transmission of HIV.

Impact and importance of effective communication in healthcare delivery

DR SHAGUFA ANWAR

Patients' perceptions of the quality of the healthcare they receive are highly dependent on the quality of their interactions with the healthcare team. The connection that a patient feels with the clinician can ultimately improve their health mediated through participation in their care, adherence to treatment and understanding of the disease.

Extensive research has shown that no matter how knowledgeable a clinician might be, if s/he is not able to open good communication with the patient, s/he may be of no help. A healthcare team member's communication skills establish strong positive relationships with the patient's capacity to follow through with medical recommendations, coexist with their chronic medical condition and adopt preventive health behaviour. In my clinic, to a degree of work experience in healthcare industry, I have seen clinician's ability to explain, listen and empathise can have a profound effect on biological and functional health outcomes as well as patient satisfaction and experience of care.

Interviewing the patient with history taking is the most commonly used tool that the clinician employs in his consultation. Most

diagnostic decisions come from this, yet studies of clinician patient visits reveal that patients are often not provided the opportunity or time to tell their story/history often due to interruptions or less time, which compromise diagnostic accuracy. Incomplete history often leads to incomplete data upon which clinical decisions are made. When interruptions occur, the patient may perceive that what they are saying is not important and leads to patients being reticent to offer additional information; which is a deterrent to collecting essential information and it hinders the doctor-patient relationship leading to patient's non-adherence to therapy.

Patients' disruptions with what the clinician wanted to do some are concerned about the cost, some find the instructions too difficult to follow, some do not understand what they are supposed to do. We further find adults with chronic illnesses underuse their prescription medication due to cost concerns; yet they fail to communicate this information to their physician. We also find some hospitalised patients not being able to identify their diagnosis or the names of their medication(s) at discharge which is an indication of ineffective communication with their physicians.

A common concern prevailing in

our healthcare scenario is lack of adequate training of healthcare professionals in the delivery of high quality patient-centred care under-scoring core communication skills such as open-ended inquiry, reflective listening and empathy as a way to respond to the unique needs, values and preference of individual patients. Clinicians and other members of the healthcare team conduct thousands of patient interactions during their career, yet communication training for clinicians and other healthcare professionals historically has received far less attention throughout their training process than have other clinical tasks.

Similar to other healthcare delivery, communication skills can be learned and improved upon. Improvement in communication skills requires commitment and practice. Given the wealth of evidence linking ineffective clinician-patient communication with increased malpractice risk, non-adherence, patient and clinician dissatisfaction, and poor patient health outcomes, the necessity of addressing communication skill deficits of healthcare practitioners is of utmost importance.

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Bangladesh commits US\$600M+ to family planning at summit

Recently, leaders from around the world, including Bangladesh, convened at the Family Planning Summit in London, United Kingdom, to make bold commitments that will help expand access to family planning to millions of women and girls worldwide. At the Summit, more than 60 governments and partners pledged commitments of at least US\$2.5 billion by 2020, with the majority of the funding (US\$1.5 billion) committed by countries in Asia and Africa.

At the Summit, the State Minister of Finance Honourable M A Mannan committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The recently approved Health Sector Programme, 2017-2021 will put the country on track to attaining the original FP2020 targets by 2030. Bangladesh commits to achieving its family planning objectives by implementing the post-partum action plan, regional family planning package for the lagging Sylhet and Chittagong divisions, and the national adolescent health strategy in a time-bound, efficient and effective manner. For this, the Government of Bangladesh will mobilise US\$615 million for the family planning programme over 2017-2021, a 67% increase in allocation from that of the pre-2017 programme. Bangladesh will improve the quality of family planning services through a health systems approach, including by increasing training to service providers, deploying additional midwives to all sub-district hospitals and placing clinical teams to supervise family planning services in all districts. Additionally, Bangladesh will work with the private sector to help address gaps in service provision and will ensure a steady supply of commodities.

Bangladesh has over 3.5 million married and sexually active unmarried adolescents (aged 15-19) of whom 18% have an unmet need for contraception.



Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is a type of bacterial infection spread by animals. It's caused by a strain of bacteria called leptospira.

In 90% of cases, leptospirosis only causes mild flu-like symptoms, such as a headache, chills and muscle pain.

Symptoms of leptospirosis

The symptoms of leptospirosis usually develop suddenly around 7 to 14 days after exposure to the leptospira bacteria.

About 90% of leptospirosis infections only cause mild symptoms, including:

- A high temperature (fever) that is usually between 38C and 40C (100.4-104-F)
- Chills
- Sudden headaches
- Nausea and vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Muscle pain, particularly affecting the muscles in the calves and lower back
- Conjunctivitis (irritation and redness of the eyes)
- Cough
- A short-lived rash

These symptoms usually resolve within five to seven days. However, in about 10% of cases people go on to experience more serious symptoms.

How is leptospirosis treated?

Leptospirosis is treated with a course of antibiotics.

For mild forms of leptospirosis, antibiotic tablets that can be taken at home are usually used for about a week.

Most people with more severe leptospirosis will be admitted to hospital so their body's functions can be supported while the underlying infection is treated with injections of antibiotics.