

52 million children living with viral hepatitis

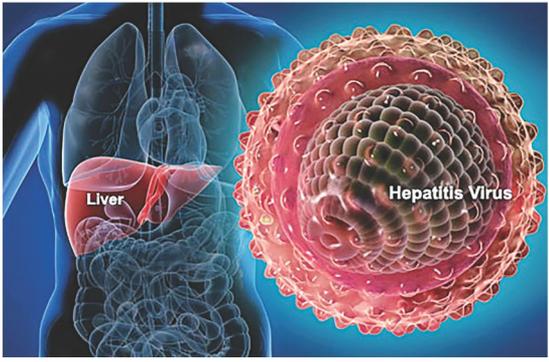
STAR HEALTH REPORT

New data presented at this year's World Hepatitis Summit in Sao Paulo, Brazil (1-3 November) showing that 52 million children worldwide living with viral hepatitis worldwide, compared to 2.1 million children living with HIV/AIDS.

An estimated 325 million people were living with viral hepatitis worldwide in 2016. Of these, 4 million were children living with hepatitis C (under 19 years) and 48 million (under 18 years) were children living with hepatitis B. Both viruses can lead to liver disease, liver cancer and death.

According to new analysis on hepatitis C in children, from Manal El-Sayed, Professor of Paediatrics at Ain Shams University, Cairo, Egypt, and Dr Homie Razaqi and his team from the Polaris Observatory, the Centers for Disease Analysis (CDA) Foundation, Lafayette, CO, USA, just 21 countries are responsible for around 80% of these paediatric hepatitis C infections, with the highest prevalence rates generally found in developing countries.

Mother to Child Transmission is one of the main causes of hepa-



titis C in children. However, neither pregnant women nor young children with this cancer-causing illness can be treated with the highly-effective direct-acting antiviral (DAA) medications. Various regulatory agencies such as the US FDA and the European Medicines Agency have now approved DAAs

for use in children aged 12 years and over. But in high-income countries, there is as yet little evidence they are being used in this age group. WHO is also yet to recommend DAA in any children regardless of age.

As a result, almost all children are only treated with older

pegylated interferon regimens, which often have severe side effects including stunting growth, influenza-like symptoms, anaemia and weight loss, and do not always cure the virus. Trials of DAA drugs in children under 12 years are also ongoing, but they have not been approved yet in

any country for these younger children.

Compared to hepatitis C, new hepatitis B infections among children are declining – from approximately 4.7% prevalence in the pre-vaccination era of the early 1980s to 1.3% – due to scaled-up efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission and global coverage with the three doses of hepatitis B vaccine. Currently, 84% of countries offer hepatitis B vaccinations. However, coverage with the initial birth dose vaccination needed to provide protection to newborns is still low at 39%.

Cases of hepatitis C in children are, however, likely to continue growing for years to come, given the lack of prevention and control programmes for pregnant women living with hepatitis C and women of child bearing age. This is exacerbated by the absence of a public health approach for case definition and management of exposed mothers or children.

"We must act and treat as many children as possible. The economic and social benefit of early hepatitis C treatment in children is substantial," Professor El-Sayed explains.

OBESITY

Key reasons why the obese do not receive adequate care

Few of the more than 90 million Americans with obesity are seeking and receiving long-term obesity care, according to new data from the Awareness, Care and Treatment in Obesity Management (ACTION) Study published in the journal Obesity.

Among the notable findings is that of 71% of people with obesity who say they have spoken with a healthcare professional (HCP) about their weight in the past 5 years, only 55% report having been given a diagnosis of obesity and less than a quarter (24%) were offered follow-up care for this disease.

Designed to identify key barriers to care from the perspective of people with obesity, HCPs and employers, the results of the ACTION Study, according to multi-disciplinary steering committee members who led the initiative, can guide collaborative action to improve care, education and support for those who live with obesity.

- Conducted with more than 3,500 participants spanning all three target groups, the ACTION Study reveals 5 key barriers to comprehensive care:
 - People with obesity engage in several serious weight loss attempts but only a few are able to maintain the achieved weight loss
 - Despite recognition of obesity as a disease, most people with obesity consider weight loss to be completely their own responsibility, which may prevent them from seeking help from their HCP
 - Nearly half of people with obesity have not been given a formal diagnosis of obesity
 - The patient-provider dialogue about weight management is insufficient with limited follow-up
 - Employer wellness programmes are not meeting the needs of people with obesity.

HEALTH bulletin

Advanced form of dialysis for kidney patients

STAR HEALTH DESK

Dr. Tan Seng Hoe is renal physician and an internist, operating SH Tan Kidney and Medical Clinic Pte Ltd. at the Gleneagles Hospital, Singapore. He recently visited Bangladesh and shared some of his views with Star Health.

Star Health: What are the main differences in the modality of renal diseases from Bangladesh and other countries?

Dr. Tan Seng Hoe: I think the overall is quite similar in terms of the group of patients that we see – but I think, predominantly the risk of hypertension and diabetes are very prominent in Bangladesh. Lots of them end up with renal diseases.

Star Health: What are the cutting edge services you provide, like transplantation is one thing, but you know it's also happening in Bangladesh. So, why patients should seek treatment in Singapore?

Dr. Tan Seng Hoe: Transplantation is so easy that it quite happens everywhere. The services that we have is dialysis – it is a little bit of difference. There is a lot of thought about haemodiafiltration. This is actually another form of dialysis – haemodiafiltration. This is a little more advanced form of dialysis. Basically, the filters are different, the machine we use is a little bit different, and the advantage of this form of dialysis is useful for patients who are with heart problems, where somebody may be



Dr. Tan Seng Hoe

unstable. This is more stable for their heart problem. The other advantage of the haemodiafiltration is – it actually helps to increase the clearance of the toxins applied.

Star Health: So, what are the main reasons that heart patients get more benefit from this?

Dr. Tan Seng Hoe: It provides a bit more stability in blood pressure; just a lot of the heart patients – when they receive haemodialysis, blood pressure drops; so they cannot receive it in fact. Haemodiafiltration gives them a little more cardiac stability.

Star Health: We are seeing the dialysis technique for a long time;

there have not been that significant changes. Is there any advancement in portable dialysis?

Dr. Tan Seng Hoe: There are currently some research going on; we have wearable dialysis, which a few countries are actually developing. Singapore has got one company which is developing a portable dialysis at this point. And this is another form of peritoneal dialysis where you bring the machine around. It is still right now in development.

Star Health: Can you tell us about some lifestyle modification for kidney disease?

Dr. Tan Seng Hoe: Lifestyle modification is very important.

If we look at the risk of development or progression of kidney disease – high blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, protein loss in the urine – these are receptors that increase the risk of progression including their habits – smoking, for example. So when we talk about lifestyle modification, it actually centres around all these few things that we want to manage – blood pressure, reduce salt intake, diabetes control is important, reducing sugar and being in control of high blood sugar level and for that between hypertension and diabetes, exercise comes in; being active in the lifestyle, open to promoting exercises, reducing weight and stop smoking if there is smoking.

Star Health: Thank you.



Faecal transplantation might help IBS symptoms

Faecal microbiota transplantation may improve symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), according to a study in the *Lancet Gastroenterology and Hepatology*.

Roughly 90 patients with moderate-to-severe, diarrhoea-predominant IBS and abdominal pain at least weekly were randomised to receive either a fresh or frozen faecal microbiota transplantation from donor stool or a placebo transplant (their own frozen stool) via colonoscopy.

The primary outcome – symptom relief 3 months after transplantation – significantly favoured active transplantation over placebo (65% vs. 43% of participants).

A commentator says that five patients would need to be treated for one patient to see significant symptom relief. However, the between-groups difference was no longer significant after 12 months.

The commentator cautions that the primary outcome "was not one that would be accepted" by regulatory agencies. In addition, whether the treatment affected patients' faecal microbiota is not reported.



Better access to healthcare for mothers in Nijhum Dwip

Establishing a normal delivery centre in the Nijhum Dwip Island at Hatiya Upazila by the local government with the technical support from MaMoni-HSS project. Save the Children has created a new hope for the women in the remote area. To ensure better access to health care for the pregnant women, the local community with the support of Junior Chamber International (JCI) Dhaka Central and MaMoni-HSS project, volunteered to construct the access road to the Nijhum Dwip (Union) Health and Family Welfare Centre.

A K M Fahruddin, DD-Family Planning, Noakhali, Md Salah Uddin, Sr Manager, Save the Children and Abu Talib Siddique, 2017 Local President, JCI Dhaka Central along with other dignitaries were present in the event.



Seminar and workshop on deworming

A dialogue exchange seminar and workshop on deworming to observe the national deworming week 2017 took place in Dhaka recently, says a press release. During the national deworming week 2017 (November 4-9, 2017), all the children ageing from 5-16 years are being provided a single dose of anthelmintic drugs in all the primary and high schools of Bangladesh.



Healthy Gut, Healthy Mind: 5 Foods to Improve Mental Health

You've heard of eating well to improve heart health and reduce the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure and certain symptoms of depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders. A few simple dietary changes may boost cognitive and reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders.



Yogurt with Active Cultures

