

Mental health in the workplace

STAR HEALTH DESK

Globally, more than 300 million people suffer from depression, the leading cause of disability, with many of these people also suffering from symptoms of anxiety. A recent World Health Organisation (WHO) led study estimates that depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy US\$ 1 trillion each year in lost productivity.

Unemployment is a well-recognised risk factor for mental health problems. Being unemployed, or getting work is protective. A negative working environment may lead to physical and mental health problems. harmful use of substances or alcohol, absenteeism and lost productivity.

Work-related risk factors

There are many risk factors for mental health that may be present in the working environment. Most risks relate to interactions between type of work, the organisational and managerial environment, the skills and competencies of employees, and the support available for employees to carry out their work. For example, a person may have the skills to complete tasks, but they may have too few resources to do what is required, or there may be unsupportive managerial or organisational practices. Risks to mental health include:

- Inadequate health and safety policies



- Poor communication and management practices
- Limited participation in decision-making or low control over one's area of work
- Low levels of support for employees
- Unclear tasks or organisational objectives
- Excessive working hours and other job demands
- Inequitable workloads or high and unrelenting workload. Some jobs may carry a higher personal risk than others (eg. first responders and humanitarian workers), which can have an impact on mental health and be a cause of symptoms of mental disorders, or lead to harmful use of alcohol or psychoactive drugs.

Creating a healthy workplace

A healthy workplace can be described as one where workers and managers actively contribute to the working environment by promoting and protecting the health, safety and well-being of all employees. A recent guide from the World Economic Forum suggests that interventions should take a 3-pronged approach:

- Protect mental health by reducing work-related risk factors
- Promote mental health by developing the positive aspects of work and the strengths of employees
- Address mental health problems regardless of cause

The guide highlights steps organisations can take to create a healthy workplace, including:

- Awareness of the workplace environment and how it can be adapted to promote better mental health for different employees
- Learning from the motivations of organisational leaders and employees who have taken action
- Not reinventing wheels by being aware of what other companies who have taken action have done
- Understanding the opportunities and needs of individual employees, in helping to develop better policies for workplace mental health
- Awareness of sources of support and where people can find help
- Interventions and good practices that protect and promote mental health in the workplace

- include:
- Implementation and enforcement of health and safety policies and practices, including identification of distress, harmful use of psychoactive substances and illness and providing resources to manage them
 - Informing staff that support is available
 - Involving employees in decision-making, conveying a feeling of control and participation; organisational practices that support a healthy work-life balance
 - Programmes for career development of employees and
 - Recognising and rewarding professionals who support contribution of employees.
- Mental health interventions should be delivered as part of an integrated health and well-being strategy that covers prevention, early identification, support and rehabilitation.
- Occupational health services or professionals may support organisations in implementing these interventions where they are available, but even when they are not, a number of changes can be made that may protect and promote mental health.
- Key to success is involving stakeholders and staff at all levels when providing protection, promotion and support interventions and when monitoring their effectiveness.

Source: World Health Organisation

DID YOU KNOW?

Babies have senses in the womb

PROF M KARIM KHAN

We often think about child, teenage and adult psychology, but rarely talk or think about foetal psychology. Having a healthy child in all sense probably is the biggest gift from the creator. Behaviourally speaking, there is little difference between a newborn baby and a 32 week old foetus. A new wave of research suggests that the foetus can feel, dream, even cry. At term, a foetus behaves almost exactly as a newborn and it continues to do so for the next 12 weeks.

By nine weeks, a developing foetus can hiccup and react to loud noises. By the end of the second trimester it can hear. Just as adults, the foetus experiences dreams. Among other mental facets, the foetus can distinguish between the voice of the mother and that of a stranger, and respond to a familiar story read to it. Even a premature baby is aware, feels, responds and adapts to its environment.

Scientists found that the foetus listens to mother's heart bit and gurgling sound of the stomach around 20-24 weeks of gestational life. At about six weeks they start sucking and at about 16 weeks of gestational life they start tasting. Awake or asleep, the human foetus moves 50 times or more each hour, flexing and extending its body, moving its head, face and limbs and exploring its warm wet compartment by touch. It touches a hand to the face, one hand to the other hand, clasps its feet, touches its foot to its leg and its hand to the umbilical cord.

Prof Karim Khan says that the foetus experiences the environment should be very congenial, smoking and alcohol intake should be avoided. Emotional unbalance should be avoided as foetus reacts to all emotions of mother.

HEALTH bulletin



Why you should care more about glaucoma

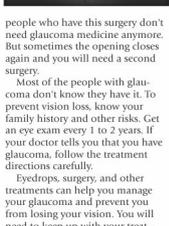
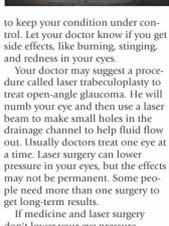
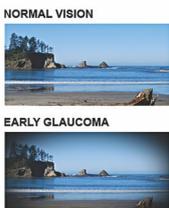
STAR HEALTH DESK

Glaucoma is a condition that can damage your optic nerve, usually because of too much pressure in your eye. The optic nerve is an important job. It sends signals from your eye to your brain, which turns them into an image you can see.

When the optic nerve is not working right, you will get problems with your vision. You can even lose your sight.

Since glaucoma sneak up on you slowly, symptoms may not show up until the disease is already far along. Without treatment, you will slowly lose your peripheral (side) vision. That means you may miss objects that you would normally see out of the corner of your eye. It is a bit like coming through a tunnel. Unlike cataract, changes in the eye sight due to glaucoma is irreversible. This is the most alarming issue. The eye sight loss can not be restored. Treatment of the glaucoma aims to stop further loss of vision. This is why, early intervention is necessary. But, in most instances, patients feel it is late stage due to lack of awareness. Diseases like diabetes contribute to the delayed realisation to many folks. Regular eye test can prevent this loss to a great extent.

Ophthalmologists will likely suggest eyedrops or pills to manage your glaucoma. They cut how much fluid your eyes make and help it drain off. Take medicine every day



to keep your condition under control. Let your doctor know if you get side effects, like burning, stinging, and redness in your eyes.

Your doctor may suggest a procedure called laser trabeculoplasty to treat open-angle glaucoma. He will numb your eye and then use a laser beam to make small holes in the drainage channel to help fluid flow out. Usually doctors treat one eye at a time. Laser surgery can lower pressure in your eyes, but the effects may not be permanent. Some people need more than one surgery to get long-term results.

If medicine and laser surgery don't lower your eye pressure enough, your doctor might recommend a procedure called trabeculectomy. She creates a flap in the white part of your eye to help let more fluid drain out. About half

people who have this surgery don't need glaucoma medicine anymore. But sometimes the opening closes again and you will need a second surgery.

Most of the people with glaucoma don't know they have it. To prevent vision loss, other your family history and other risks. Get an eye exam every 1 to 2 years. If your doctor tells you that you have glaucoma, follow the treatment directions carefully.

Eyedrops, surgery, and other treatments can help you manage your glaucoma and prevent you from losing your vision. You will need to keep up with your treatment throughout your life to keep your eye pressure in check. Your doctor will want you to see him/her for checkups a few times a year.

Never neglect glaucoma.

Small steps towards a frog leap

DR SYED AHMED MORTADA

Future medicine will be banking on prevention. The best prevention is vaccination. Though some simple prevention at home vis-a-vis outdoor for elderly proved better than vaccination. Elderly, especially above 65 years with impaired motion, memory, sight, balance, hearing and touch sensation should remain on their guard for every step they put inside or outside the door.

About 30% falls irrespective of age and result in injury and 10% end in fracture. Also 33% of elderly people at least fall inside their home property the year a person who has had a fall is likely to fall again. A stitch in time saves nine. Not only falls but the following measures cover a brace of do's and don'ts in everyday life.

1. While brushing teeth or washing face over the basin, do not bend your back. Lean keeping your back straight.
2. While lifting weight or heavy material, do not bend your back. Keeping the back straight, bend your knees lifting the materials from the sides.
3. Keep some dices or biscuits handy while keeping outdoor if you are a diabetic.
4. Keep the door of the bath room shut but not locked.
5. Use corrugated mat or rough sheet on the floor of the bathroom. Install strong metal handles on the wall under the shower.
6. For unstable people when moving about, use suitable accessories like wheel chair, walking frame, quad stick, hearing aid, glasses and non-slipping foot wear.
7. Stay in bed when feeling drowsy or griddy, change to sitting or standing position slowly.
8. In case of confusion, disorientation, sweating, anxiety or chest pain, call for help immediately.

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Miracle cure costs less than a budget airline flight

The revolution in generic drugs means that a 12-week course of cure hepatitis C can be manufactured for just US\$50 – as low as the cost of a plane ticket on many low-cost airlines. Furthermore, new data shows that these generic copies are just as effective as the branded medicines. Yet restrictions and patent issues around the world mean that hardly any patients can access the drugs at these low costs.

"As there are around 70 million people infected with hepatitis C worldwide, the basic cost of the drug to treat everyone infected globally, at \$50 each, would be around US \$3.5 billion," explains Dr Andrew Hill, a pharmacology expert from the University of Liverpool, UK. This represents less than a fraction of 1% of the global health budget of some US\$ 8 trillion.

Countries must massively step up their screening efforts, or they will simply run out of people to treat – a diagnostic 'burn-out'. The proportion of patients with hepatitis C who know they have it ranges from 44% in high-income countries to just 9% in low-income countries. He concludes that lessons should be learned from the HIV epidemic to successfully end the hepatitis C epidemic worldwide.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a mental anxiety disorder which produces repeated thoughts or images about many different things, such as fear of germs, dirt or intruders; acts of violence; hurting loved ones; sexual acts; or being overly tidy.

On average people are diagnosed with OCD when they are 19th years old

In the U.S. 1 in 40 adults and 1 in 100 children face OCD

According to the WHO, anxiety disorders like OCD, are more prevalent in developed countries than in developing countries

OCD may affect men & women equally



One study in Bangladesh found more than 800,000 population prevalence of OCD

