

# Heart diseases of mothers and what to do?

DR TAHERA NAZRIN

Rubaiya, my friend came to me few days ago in an evening. She was a bit anxious. She said, "Doctor, I am expecting but I have a hole in my heart. Now I am having respiratory distress while working or climbing stairs and chest pain as well."

A woman who has a hole in the heart detected earlier as atrial septal defect (ASD) should be closed in time. Sometimes this type of defect in heart remain undetected as the child having ASD seldom has symptoms. Moderate to large atrial septal defect which may cause palpitation, chest pain and/or tiredness during playing or heavy work or sometimes poor weight gain during childhood.

Due to less symptoms of ASD, children are often ignored and develop severe pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) with respiratory distress at later age, even during routine checkup of pregnancy. Because the physiological and haemodynamic adaptation during pregnancy are poorly tolerated in pulmonary hypertension patients.

If mother has large ASD with severe pulmonary arterial hyperten-



sion, it becomes life threatening for both the mother and child. Even in accordance to European guidelines, PAH considered as a contraindication to pregnancy with an associated 30-50% risk of mortality. The woman who choose to proceed with high risk pregnancy with PAH should be treated with disease targeted therapies and have facilities of planned elective caesarian section with close collaboration of multi-disciplinary team.

Any valvular heart defect detected in childhood of a woman should also be evaluated by a cardiologist before planning the pregnancy. Because team work of obstetrician, cardiologist, neonatologist and paediatric cardiologist during planned delivery in hospital will make the things easy and systematic.

Hypertension should be under control during pregnancy. If a woman has hypertension and is

taking some antihypertensive medication, she must consult with her cardiologist and gynaecologist before planning for pregnancy. Because, taking these medications during pregnancy have been reported to cause congenital malformations of heart as atrial septal defect (ASD), ventricular septal defect (VSD), patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) and pulmonary stenosis (PS).

Mothers having congenital

heart diseases (CHD) even if it is post-operative have 15% incidence of CHD of their child. So, after birth, echocardiography of children is beneficial. Even foetal echocardiography during pregnancy can be done.

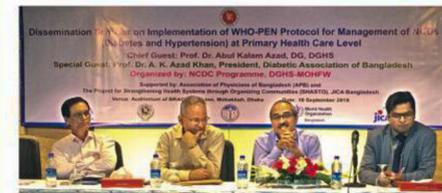
Maternal ingestion of high dose aspirin also causes harm to the foetuses which may results in persistent pulmonary hypertension of newborn (PPHN).

Increased heart rate (tachyarrhythmia) are the most frequently observed cardiac complications during pregnancy. The use of the antiarrhythmic drugs (AADs) during pregnancy is challenging due to potential foetal teratogenic effect. Hence initiation of antiarrhythmic drug therapy by physician requires careful consideration of the potential risks and benefits to the individual patients.

For the safety of the mother and baby, judicious management is essential undoubtedly. Awareness regarding heart diseases of mother and proper management would make our future baby safe.

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## PHC



### Anti-hypertensive and anti-diabetic drugs for the patients at free of cost

A new protocol has been developed to prevent the non communicable diseases (NCD) which will be implemented at the primary health care facility level shortly in Bangladesh.

It has been developed by the Non Communicable Disease Control (NCD) Programme of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) with the assistance from Association of Physicians of Bangladesh (APB), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and World Health Organisation (WHO). The protocol is being developed in line with the WHO Package of Essential Non Communicable Disease Interventions (WHO PEN) for primary care in low-resource settings that can be delivered to an acceptable quality of care, even in resource-poor settings.

This disease management protocol has been intended to be used by the primary health care physicians at the primary health care delivery centres across Bangladesh as a component of the Essential Service Package (ESP).

As part of the protocol, the patients that will be diagnosed with hypertension and diabetes will be counseled about living a healthy lifestyle and provided with required expensive anti-hypertensive and anti-diabetic drugs at free of cost.

## HEALTH bulletin

### Small things build confidence

PROF DR M A KHAN

World Lymphoma Awareness Day is held on 15 September every year. It is a day dedicated to raising awareness of lymphoma, an increasingly common form of cancer. This year, World Lymphoma Awareness Day has launched the 'Small Things Build Confidence' campaign.

**What is lymphoma?** Lymphoma is a cancer of the lymphatic system. The lymphatic system is made up of lymph nodes and lymph vessels over the body that make and store cells mainly lymphocytes that fight infection. Lymphoma is the most common haematological malignancy and 4% of all cancer.

**What are the symptoms of lymphoma?**

The first sign of lymphoma is often one or more large, swollen lymph nodes. These swollen lymph nodes can be felt under the skin, but are usually not painful. They are often in the neck, groin, armpit or abdomen. Lymph nodes deeper in the body can also become swollen and cause symptoms. For example, swollen lymph nodes around the lungs can cause a cough or trouble breathing.

**How to confirm the diagnosis of lymphoma?**

In addition to do physical examination and ask about symptoms, other major tests include: lymph node biopsy, bone marrow biopsy, immunohistochemistry, fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC) and CT scan, PET scan, or other imaging tests.



#### Type of Lymphoma

There are two kinds of lymphoma — Hodgkin's lymphoma and Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

#### How is lymphoma treated?

Lymphoma can be treated in different ways depending on the type of lymphoma, it has subtypes and stages. Different mode of treatments are:

**Chemotherapy:** Usually combination of drugs used after specific time interval called protocol, such as ABVD (combination of 4 drugs), used in Hodgkin's lymphoma and R-CHOP (5 drugs), used in some types of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

**Immunotherapy:** This is a targeted therapy (e.g. Rituximab, one type of monoclonal anti-body that kill cancer cell that carries CD+20 antigen)

**Radiation therapy:** There are different kinds of radiation therapy

available.

**Bone marrow transplantation:** This is also called "stem cell transplant.

Lymphoma is a type of malignant disease and is increasing in Bangladesh due to the misuse of chemicals and insecticides. Accurate diagnosis by histopathology and immunohistochemistry as well as proper staging of the disease are mandatory for appropriate treatment. Most of the Hodgkin's lymphoma and a good percentage of Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma are now curable. In Bangladesh, we have all the facilities to diagnose and treat lymphoma accurately.

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### Chronic pain tied to increased suicide risk

People suffering from chronic pain may be at increased risk for suicide, according to a retrospective study in the Annals of Internal Medicine.

Using data from 18 states participating in the National Violent Death Reporting System, researchers identified 123,000 people aged 10 years and older who died by suicide over a 12-year period. Some 7% had evidence of chronic pain in 2003, rising to 10% in 2014.

The most common conditions associated with chronic pain were back pain, cancer, and arthritis. In a random sample of cases with chronic pain in which suicide notes were available, two-thirds of the notes mentioned pain as a contributing factor to the suicide.

The researchers write, "Providers should be alert to and possibly screen for depression and suicidal behaviours among patients with chronic pain." An editorialist adds, "Suicide prevention involves making effective pain interventions more available, which extends beyond providing access to opioids and should also include, if appropriate, other medications, interventional programmes, physical therapy, and psychosocial approaches."

### Surprising causes of sudden tooth sensitivity

DR REHNUMA ABDULLAH

Do you ever feel a sudden, sharp sensation in your teeth when you are drinking something cold, hot or eating something sweet or sour? If so, then you are suffering from teeth sensitivity and according to a study, 1 out of 3 people suffer from teeth sensitivity in Bangladesh. Here is how to figure out the source of sudden discomfort.

**Diet:** Eating acidic or hard foods can harm teeth. Juices, citrus fruits and sports drinks can contribute to tooth sensitivity.

**Harsh brushing:** Habits like using a hard bristled toothbrush and brushing teeth aggressively can contribute to tooth sensitivity.

**Tooth decay:** Even a small cavity can eat away enough tooth enamel to expose dentin and cause sensitivity.

**Recent dental work:** People may experience temporary sensitivity after having a dental procedure. This should improve within four weeks but they should let dentist know if it persists.

**Accidental trauma:** Due to minor injuries in any type of accidents, enamel may crack down and leads to sensitivity.

**Tooth whitening:** Sensitivity can be a temporary side effect of a whitening treatment, but it can also result from using overly harsh whitening products or whitening teeth too frequently.

**Split tooth:** If someone experience sensitivity when biting down, it may indicate a split tooth. This requires immediate attention.

**Eating or digestive disorders:** The frequent vomiting associated with bulimia leads to stomach acids wearing away at the surface of the teeth. Acid reflux can have the same effect.

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## September World Alzheimer's Month

### Facts About Alzheimer's Disease

- Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. Dementia is a brain condition that affects parts of the brain that control thought, memory & language.
- Alzheimer's disease and related dementias can seriously affect a person's ability to carry out daily activities.
- The risk of developing Alzheimer's disease increases with age, but Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging.
- Most people living with Alzheimer's disease are older than 65 years. However, people younger than age 65 can develop Alzheimer's disease but it is not common.
- Scientists do not know what causes Alzheimer's disease. However, like other chronic conditions, it is probably a result of multiple factors.

### What kinds of brain exercises should I do?

That may be vary from person to person. But the main idea seems to be keeping your brain active and challenged. You could start with something as simple as eating with the hand you usually don't use from time to time.

You can also:

- Learn something new, such as a second language or a musical instrument.
- Play board games with your kids or grandkids. Or get your friends together for a weekly game of cards. Mix it up by trying new games. The extra bonus of activities like these? Social connections also help your brain.
- Work on crossword, number, or other kinds of puzzles.
- Play online memory games or video games.
- Read, write, or sign up for local adult education classes.
- of Alzheimer's disease.

Controlling high blood pressure, exercising regularly and quitting smoking may reduce your risk



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