

Quality healthcare for all: The next frontier for Bangladesh

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It is widely recognised that the healthcare seeking in Bangladesh is rapidly changing for the better, triggered by improvement in economic status, education and communication network and transport. The country has made significant gain in improving access to maternal, newborn and child health services, as indicated by the consistent improvement in the coverage rates for many of the health service indicators.

While a vast majority of the population depends on private health providers and hospitals, the government facilities continue to play a very important role in meeting the healthcare need of a large segment of the population. It is high time that the country make deliberate efforts to meet the minimum acceptable standard of care provided by the government and private health facilities across the country. For, the mere expansion of services without the explicit strategies for ensuring quality may prove to be a wastage of scarce resources.

Bangladesh's commitment to join the movement towards universal health coverage also demands that the country should



take definitive steps for guaranteeing minimum level of quality in healthcare.

Healthcare services need to be focused not only on the outcome of treatment but also on the positive experiences of the user — effective and respectful. For maternal, newborn and child health, this would mean a continuum of care approach linking home and community-based

services with the primary, secondary and tertiary level facilities. In addition, the healthcare providers need to be competent and well-equipped to deliver the care as per the expected standard and ensuring a positive experience for the users. Such care can also help to rebuild the trust and confidence of people in the health system and further enhance the utilisation of health services.

It is imperative that the foundations of the health system be strengthened to focus on improved quality of healthcare in the public and private domains. This requires strong leadership at all levels, an appropriate organisation of healthcare delivery platforms, skilled and motivated health workforce, health supplies and technologies, reliable and user-

friendly data on quality of care.

The recent assessments on the readiness of health facilities, both public and private, raises many concern about their preparedness to ensure the minimum level of quality. The education of healthcare professionals in the country, in addition to the technical competencies, need to pay special attention to ethical, patient-centred and compassionate care.

The regulatory system in the country fall short of the expectations in terms of enforcing accountability for quality. Lastly, people everywhere need to be capacitated to ask for effective and respectful care, irrespective of their ability to pay. There has to be a sense of urgency across all spheres of the health system in Bangladesh to take decisive steps to fill the glaring gaps in the quality of healthcare delivered in the country.

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The views expressed are personal and do not necessarily reflect the views of Save the Children, USAID or the United States Government.

SUICIDE TALK

Comprehensive measures to prevent suicide

Close to 800,000 people die due to suicide every year. For every suicide, there are many more people who attempt suicide every year. A prior suicide attempt is the single most important risk factor for suicide in the general population.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds. 79% of global suicides occur in low- and middle-income countries. Ingestion of pesticide, hanging and firearms are among the most common methods of suicide globally.

Suicides are preventable. There are a number of measures that can be taken at population, sub-population and individual levels to prevent suicide and suicide attempts. These include reducing access to the means of suicide (e.g. pesticides, firearms, certain medications); reporting by media in a responsible way; introducing alcohol policies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol; early identification, treatment and care of people with mental and substance use disorders, chronic pain and acute emotional distress; training of non-specialised health workers in the assessment and management of suicidal behaviour; follow-up care for people who attempted suicide and provision of community support.

Suicide is a complex issue and therefore suicide prevention efforts require coordination and collaboration among multiple sectors of society, including the health sector and other sectors such as education, labour, agriculture, business, justice, law, defense, politics, and the media.

These efforts must be comprehensive and integrated as no single approach alone can make an impact on an issue as complex as suicide.

Source: World Health Organisation

HEALTH bulletin



Eating foods with low nutritional quality ratings linked to cancer risk

The consumption of foods with higher scores on the British Food Standards Agency nutrient profiling system (FSAm-NPS), reflecting a lower nutritional quality, is associated with an increased risk of developing cancer, according to a study published in PLOS Medicine.

Helping consumers make healthier food choices is a key challenge for the prevention of cancer and other chronic diseases. European authorities are considering implementing a unique nutrition label as a system to reflect the nutritional quality of food products, among which the five-color Nutri-Score derived from the FSAm-NPS, used in France and recently endorsed by Belgian authorities.

The researchers found that a higher FSAm-NPS DI, reflecting a lower nutritional quality of food consumed, was associated with a higher risk of total cancer like cancers of the colon-rectum, upper aerodigestive tract and stomach, lung for men, and liver and postmenopausal breast for women.

Obesity is increasing among the younger generation in Bangladesh

DR TAREQ SALAHUDDIN

Obesity and overweight are considered both non-communicable diseases and risk factors. Obesity and overweight increase the risk of diabetes, cancer and cardio-vascular diseases (CVD).

A study, led by the Imperial College London and the World Health Organisation (WHO), established experts' apprehension that Bangladesh is facing the 'dual burden' of both malnutrition and obesity. The study calculated and compared body mass index (BMI) among children, adolescents and adults from 1975 to 2016.

The increasing rates in children are especially worrying as children are not fully developed and more vulnerable; childhood obesity can

cause serious chronic complications further in life.

In 1980, 7% of adults and 3% of children were overweight or obese in Bangladesh. In 2013, those rates had climbed to 17% for adults but only 4.5% for children — according to The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) of the University of Washington.

A research published in "BMC Paediatrics" journal explored the "Prevalence of childhood obesity and overweight in Bangladesh: findings from a countrywide epidemiological study".

They concluded that the rate of obesity and overweight was alarming among school aged children in the urban areas in Bangladesh. Overweight and underweight were coexisting which needs special

attention to minimise the dual burden.

Overweight and obesity is associated with increased total mortality and increased risk of disease or death from cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and several types of cancer. It does so by increasing high blood pressure, blood cholesterol, insulin resistance and inflammation as well as hormone levels.

Physical activity at work, walking, and, in some populations, bicycling used to be major contributors to total energy expenditure but have declined dramatically in urban societies.

Globally, 1 in 4 adults, and 3 in 4 adolescents (aged 11–17 years), do not currently meet the global recommendations for physical activity set by WHO.

According to the WHO-Diabetes country profile of Bangladesh in 2016, the physical inactivity was prevailing among 25.1% of population.

The recent trend of obesity among Bangladeshi young generation is very high. Due to the influence of western lifestyle, the internet, children are more likely to consume fast food and other junk foods.

The impact of obesity is alarming — early onset of NCDs and in some cases fatal incidents are occurring. NCD deaths are projected to increase by 15% globally between 2010 and 2020.

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STAR HEALTH REPORT

The 4th annual conference and scientific seminar of the Society of Organ Transplantation, Bangladesh was held recently at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), says a press release.

The speakers declared that the society is taking the revolutionary steps with the collaboration of Asian Society of Transplantation, Multi Organ Harvesting Aid Network Foundation (MOHAN), India and Korea University Anam Hospital to promote organ transplantation in Bangladesh in order to save many lives with the slogan "Donate organ and save your close relation".

According to the "Transplantation of Human Organs (Amendment) Bill, 2018", if a patient dies in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), the 'Brain Death Committee' will declare the death of the patient officially. After the declaration of death, with the permission of the patient's family, the organs of the deceased patient will be extracted in order to transplant them to another patient in need.

Professor Dr Harun-Ur-Rashid, President of the Society of Organ Transplantation, Bangladesh said that this new effort would help save lives of thousands of people in need of organ transplantations. Awareness on organ transplantation needs to be made widespread in Bangladesh to make the efforts successful.

  /StarHealthBD

Sinusitis

Symptoms

- A green or yellow discharge from your nose
- A blocked nose
- Pain and tenderness around your cheeks, eyes or forehead
- A high temperature (fever) of 38°C (100.4°F) or more
- Toothache
- Bad breath (halitosis)

Prevention

- Treat stuffiness (nasal congestion) caused by colds or allergies promptly.
- Avoid smoking.
- If you have allergies, avoid the things that trigger your allergy attacks.
- Make sure your child gets all the recommended immunizations.



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