

Better care and stronger legislation to save babies

Nearly 30 million sick and premature newborns in dire need of treatment every year

STAR HEALTH DESK

Nearly 30 million babies are born too soon, too small or become sick every year and need specialised care to survive, according to a new report by a global coalition that includes Unicef and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The report, *Survive and Thrive: Transforming care for every small and sick newborn*, finds that among the newborn babies most at risk of death and disability are those with complications from prematurity, brain injury during childbirth, severe bacterial infection or jaundice, and those with congenital conditions.

Additionally, the financial and psychological toll on their families can have detrimental effects on their cognitive, linguistic and emotional development.

Without specialised treatment, many at-risk newborns would not survive their first month of life, according to the report. In 2017, some 2.5 million newborns died, mostly from preventable causes. Almost two-thirds of babies who died were born premature. And even if they survive, these babies face chronic diseases or develop-



mental delays. In addition, an estimated 1 million small and sick newborns survive with a long-term disability.

With nurturing care, these babies can live without major complications. The report shows that by 2030, in 81 countries, the lives of 2.9 million women, stillborns and newborns can be saved with smarter strategies. For example, if the same health team cares for both mother and baby through labour, birth and beyond, they can identify problems early on.

In addition, almost 68 percent of newborn deaths could be averted by 2030 with simple fixes such as exclusive breastfeeding; skin-to-skin contact between the mother or father and the baby; medicines and essential equipment; and access to clean, well-equipped health facilities staffed by skilled health workers.

Other measures like resuscitating a baby who cannot breathe properly, giving the mother an injection to prevent bleeding, or delaying the cutting of the umbilical cord could also save millions.

According to the report, the world will not achieve the global target to achieve health for all unless it transforms care for every newborn. Without rapid progress, some countries will not meet this target for another 11 decades. To save newborns, the report recommends:

- Providing round-the-clock inpatient care for newborns seven days a week.
- Training nurses to provide hands-on care working in partnership with families.
- Harnessing the power of

parents and families by teaching them how to become expert caregivers and care for their babies, which can reduce stress, help babies gain weight and allow their brains to develop properly.

- Providing good quality of care should be a part of country policies, and a lifelong investment for those who are born small or sick.
- Counting and tracking every small and sick newborn allows managers to monitor progress and improve results.
- Allocating the necessary resources, as an additional investment of US\$ 0.20 cents per person can save 2 of every 3 newborns in low- and middle-income countries by 2030.

Almost three decades ago, the Convention on the Rights of the Child guaranteed every newborn the right to the highest standard of health care, and it is time for countries around the world to make sure the legislative, medical, human and financial resources are in place to turn that right into a reality for every child, the report says.

Source: World Health Organisation

SBCC

Convincing Chinese smokers to kick the habit — by text

Among smokers receiving a 12-week-long mobile phone-based intervention encouraging them to quit, up to 6.5% of participants stopped smoking by the end of the study, according to a research article published in the open-access journal PLOS Medicine by Jinsong Tang of the Second Xiangya Hospital of Central South University in China, and colleagues.

As noted by the authors, the so-called “Happy Quit” intervention could have far greater reach and higher feasibility than in-person treatments, so it has great potential to improve population health and should be considered for large-scale use in China.

China has the highest global prevalence of cigarette smokers, accounting for more than 40% of the total cigarette consumption in the world. Smoking cessation remains the single most effective strategy for preventing lung cancer and other serious smoking-related health conditions, but the availability of cessation services in China is extremely limited.

A total of 1,369 adult smokers with the intention to quit smoking were recruited and randomly assigned to a 12-week intervention consisting of either high-frequency messaging or low-frequency messaging, or to a control group that received text messages unrelated to quitting.

The intervention consisted of text messages that were based on the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy and aimed at improving self-efficacy and behavioural capability for quitting.

Although the proportion of smokers quitting was low overall, participants who received high-frequency or low-frequency messaging were significantly more likely to quit smoking than the controls.

HEALTH bulletin



Type 2 diabetes is associated with a decline in brain function

New research published in *Diabetologia* (the journal of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes [EASD]) shows that in older people living in the community, type 2 diabetes (T2D) is associated with a decline in verbal memory and fluency over 5 years.

However, contrary to the previous studies, the decrease in brain volume often found in older people with T2D was not found to be directly associated with cognitive decline during this time period. Yet compared with people without T2D, those with T2D had evidence of greater brain atrophy at the beginning of the study.

Previous research has shown that T2D can double the risk of dementia in older people. Although people with diabetes had evidence of greater brain atrophy at the start of the study, there was no difference in the rate of brain atrophy between those with and without diabetes over the time course in this study.

There was also no evidence in the study that the rate of brain atrophy directly impacted on the diabetes-cognition relationship.

Care of the elderly by physiotherapy

ZAHID BIN SULTAN

Now-a-days physiotherapy is a popular term for elderly people. In Bangladesh, the number of elderly people is increasing rapidly due to the improved quality of life. People above 60 years of age are considered as elderly people. According to the report of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, around 7% of the country's total population constitutes the elderly people, but the absolute number is quite significant (about 10 million).

Care of the elderly is important because they are vulnerable to different health problems. The body begins to lose strength, mobility, and flexibility due to the ageing process. But it is possible to take care of the elderly by proper physiotherapy intervention by a qualified physiotherapist.

Common health problems of elderly people may include arthritis, cardiovascular diseases and hypertension, stroke, cancer, obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis, respiratory diseases, sensory impairments, reduced physical strength and endurance etc.

Benefits of physiotherapy for the elderly

A qualified physiotherapist assesses the overall health condition and decides which exercise programmes are suitable, depending on the fitness and other health conditions or disabilities that affect the ability



to exercise. Physiotherapy helps to achieve the following outcomes:

- Physiotherapy reduces pain, prevents joint stiffness and disability associated with arthritis.
- It can improve joint movement, increase muscle strength and endurance.
- It reduces breathlessness associated with respiratory diseases and prevents respiratory complications.
- Physiotherapy helps to maintain blood pressure in normal range. Drugs are prescribed in severe cases, but if the blood pressure is in borderline for treatment, exercise can help in lowering the blood pressure. In case of the patient with hypertension, a physiotherapist can design an exercise plan depending on the blood pressure and other health conditions.
- Physiotherapy helps in early mobilisation and makes the patient as independent as possible depending on the severity of the stroke. It

can help to get muscle strength back and prevent disability after stroke.

- It helps to prevent the onset of diabetes or to stop the condition becoming worse. Physiotherapists advise a set of exercise to reduce body fat and to improve how the body processes glucose. Both are key factors in managing diabetes.
 - Physiotherapy can strengthen bones as well as muscles that prevent osteoporosis. Bone is a living tissue that can be improved through some exercise.
 - Research has shown that exercise can increase the chances of surviving and reduce the risk of cancer coming back. Specialist physiotherapists can also help with problems and possible side effects of treatment such as tiredness, osteoporosis and lymphoedema.
 - Physiotherapy treats and prevents pressure ulcers associated with immobility or sensory loss.
 - A physiotherapist can help to improve balance that reduces the risk of falling and maximise safety.
- Physiotherapy for the elderly is extremely useful and safe. It can make the elderly independent and help them in maintaining a physically active life if they receive physiotherapy from a skilled and qualified physiotherapist.

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Early symptoms of cancer



Cancer can cause many different symptoms. These are some of them that one should notice:

- A fever that just does not go away and does not have an obvious cause.
- A nagging cough that is not going away or coughing up blood.
- Skin changes, such as: a new mole or a change in an existing mole. A sore that does not heal.
- Breast changes, such as: change in size or shape of the breast or nipple. Change in the texture of breast skin.
- A thickening or lump on or under the skin.
- Hoarseness of voice.
- Changes in bowel habits, indigestion or bloating.
- Difficult or painful urination.
- Problems with eating, such as: discomfort after eating, a hard time swallowing and/or changes in appetite.
- Weight gain or loss with no known reason.
- Abdominal pain.
- Unexplained night sweats.
- Unusual bleeding or discharge, including: blood in the urine, vaginal bleeding and/or blood in the stool.
- Feeling weak or very tired.

Most often, these symptoms are not due to cancer. They may also be caused by benign tumours or other problems. If you have symptoms that last for a couple of weeks, it is important to see a doctor so that problems can be diagnosed and treated as early as possible. Usually, early cancer does not cause pain.

If you have symptoms, do not wait to feel pain before seeing a doctor.



/StarHealthBD



Orion Pharma Scholarship for Medical Student

ডাক্তারবহীন একটি সুস্থ, সুন্দর এবং সাবলীল সমাজ কি চিন্তা করা যায় ?

ডাক্তার হওয়ার স্বপ্ন অনেকেরই, কিন্তু অনেক সময় শুধু আর্থিক সংকটের কারণে আজন্ম লালিত স্বপ্ন ম্লান হয়ে যায়। সেই সব স্বপ্নবান, সম্ভাবনাময় মেধাবী শিক্ষার্থীদের লক্ষ্য অর্জনের সহযোগিতার জন্য ওরিয়ন ফার্মা ওয়েলফেয়ার ট্রাস্টের সমন্বয়যোগী উদ্যোগ “ওরিয়ন ফার্মা মেডিকেল স্কলারশীপ”।

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