

Rethinking obesity pandemics

Powerful vested interests, misplaced economic incentives are major drivers of the joint pandemics of obesity, undernutrition and climate change!

STAR HEALTH DESK

Leaders must take a hard line against powerful commercial interests and rethink global economic incentives within the food system in order to tackle the joint pandemics of obesity, undernutrition and climate change, according to a major new report by The Lancet Commission on Obesity.

A key recommendation from the Commission is the call to establish a new global treaty on food systems to limit the political influence of Big Food.

Malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition and obesity, is by far the biggest cause of ill-health and premature death globally. Both undernutrition and obesity are expected to be made significantly worse by climate change.

The report follows the publication of the Lancet-EAT Commission, which provided the first scientific targets for a healthy diet within planetary boundaries. Now, the new report analyses the wider systems underpinning the global obesity pandemic, and identifies solutions to address decades of policy failure.

Over the past two decades, obesity, undernutrition and cli-



mate change have been viewed as separate, and policy responses have been unacceptably slow due to reluctance of policy makers to implement effective policies, powerful opposition by vested commercial interests, and insufficient demand for change by the public and civil society.

Undernutrition is declining too slowly to meet global targets, no country has reversed its obesity epidemic, and comprehensive policy responses to the threat of

climate change have barely begun.

"Until now, undernutrition and obesity have been seen as polar opposites of either too few or too many calories. In reality, they are both driven by the same unhealthy, inequitable food systems, underpinned by the same political economy that is single-focused on economic growth, and ignores the negative health and equity outcomes. Climate change has the same story of profits and

power ignoring the environmental damage caused by current food systems, transportation, urban design and land use. Joining the three pandemics together as The Global Syndemic allows us to consider common drivers and shared solutions, with the aim of breaking decades of policy inertia," says Commission co-chair, Professor Boyd Swinburn of the University of Auckland.

The new Commission defines

The Global Syndemic as the global interactions of the pandemics of obesity, undernutrition and climate change, which are linked through common drivers and shared solutions.

Driving The Global Syndemic are food and agriculture policies, transportation, urban design and land use systems — which in turn are driven by policies and economic incentives that promote overconsumption and inequalities.

Among the actions recommended, the Commission calls for the establishment of a Framework Convention on Food Systems (FCFS) — similar to global conventions for tobacco control and climate change — to restrict the influence of the food industry in policy making and to mobilise national action for healthy, equitable and sustainable food systems.

Economic incentives must be redesigned, and US\$ 5 trillion in government subsidies to fossil fuel and large agricultural businesses globally should be redirected towards sustainable, healthy, environmentally friendly activities.

Additionally, a global philanthropic fund of US\$1 billion must be set up to support civil society in advocating for change.

DID YOU KNOW?



What happens when sand fleas burrow in your skin?

Tungiasis, a tropical disease associated with poverty, is caused by the penetration of female sand fleas into a person's skin, usually in their toes or feet.

When the female sand flea (*Tunga penetrans* or *Tunga trimamillata*) penetrates the skin, it begins quickly growing. Within days, this growth causes intense inflammation with pain and itching. Generally, once all eggs are expelled into the environment through a tiny hole in the skin and the parasite has died, symptoms regress. But in endemic settings, residents are frequently re-infected and end up with hundreds or thousands of embedded sand fleas. While mild cases of tungiasis with a few embedded sand fleas can be treated surgically, in very severe tungiasis surgical removal of embedded sand fleas is not possible.

"Our findings are a good argument to make a call for action for those countries in which tungiasis occurs in remote settings and where health coverage is poor," the researchers say. "Dimeticone should be made available to treat patients in an early stage of disease to avoid life-threatening sequels."

HEALTH bulletin



E-cig outperform nicotine replacement therapy for smoking cessation

Adults who smoke conventional cigarettes are more likely to quit smoking successfully when they use electronic cigarettes rather than nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) as a quit aid, according to a randomised trial results published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Nearly 900 UK adults who were looking to stop smoking were randomised to use e-cigarettes or NRT beginning on their quit date.

The e-cigarette group was given a starter pack but could then use the product of their choice, while NRT participants could choose their preferred product. All participants also received at least four weekly sessions of behavioural support.

The primary outcome — the rate of abstinence at 1 year confirmed by carbon monoxide levels — favoured the e-cigarette group (18% vs. 9.9% in the NRT group).

The result has raised debate on rethinking the smoking cessation strategy to be prescribed.

Delivery after care

PROF DR HAMIDA BEGUM

A 29 years old woman delivered a healthy male baby after giving birth of 3 female babies previously. All family members were very happy and were busy with the baby boy. But the mother developed severe per vaginal bleeding within half an hour after delivery. She suffered from massive postpartum haemorrhage leading to irreversible shock which eventually lead to her death.

This is the 4th stage of labour, most vulnerable time after birth of a baby. Commonest cause of maternal mortality is postpartum haemorrhage in developing countries. The critical time a pregnant women faces death challenges are during delivery, first 2 hours after delivery and 7 days after delivery. More than one fourth (30%) of all maternal deaths across the world occurs during these crucial times, mostly because of unawareness, negligence and delay in initial management.

A delivery has 4 labour stages: starting from true labour pain to full dilatation of mouth of uterus, then complete delivery of baby followed by complete expulsion of placenta and membranes. After that, most important stage comes, the 4th stage — initial 2 hours just after delivery.

Puerperium is the time of 6 weeks after delivery when all maternal tissues which participated physical, physiological and psychological changes during pregnancy gradually returns back to their original pre-pregnant state.

So in these critical junctures she needs utmost care, empathy and attention from family members and caregivers who assists her to become a successful mother.

For the purpose of management of these most critical lifesaving issues, we describe it in 3 phases.

First, 24 hours after delivery: To wipe out the unbearable pain and sufferings that she underwent during birth process, she critically needs both physical and mental rest, so better to provide her some pain reliever as well as some warm drinks plus meticulous follow up of her vital signs like pulse, blood pressure, amount of per vaginal bleeding etc.

If she is unable to pass urine because of trauma or difficult delivery, she may be assisted with an indwelling catheter. This will facilitate to see the amount, colour of urine at the same time emptying of bladder helps in contractions of uterus to prevent postpartum bleeding.

So all deliveries are to be conducted in well-equipped hospitals or at least by well-trained birth attendants. Blood and uterus contracting drugs must be available as well as antibiotics to prevent any catastrophe.

Secondly, first week: She must be provided a balanced diet (extra 300 kcal) than pregnancy. After normal delivery if there is no complication she can be discharged after 24 hours and after operative delivery she can be discharged after 3-4 days with adequate counselling so that gradually she can start her daily household activities.

She must be on absolute breast feeding for the baby (no other fluid other than breast milk) for 6 months with advice not to lift heavy weight as most of the village women do to prevent subsequent development of prolapse/descent of genital organs.

Any sort of excess bleeding, foul smelling vaginal discharge, breast tenderness, wound tenderness or discharge, high temperature, any sort of depression must be notified early.

Finally, next 2nd-6th week: look for overall well-being of both mother and baby. Now advise her regarding pelvic floor muscle exercise (KEGEL exercise) and also about family planning with possible contraception.

About 10-15% women might suffer from some depression or postpartum blues. Adequate bond-age and homely environment can eliminate this depression so that she does not suffer from postpartum psychosis.

It is the sacred responsibility of a care-giver (doctor/midwife/skilled birth attendant) to counsel a pregnant woman and a women after delivery about the overall well-being.

Responsibility of the husband and family members is to provide her with all necessities to create a woman and baby friendly environment.

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An overdose of paracetamol can cause liver damage

TAWHID ISLAM

Paracetamol is one of the most commonly used non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) drugs as an analgesic and antipyretic medicine. People take it under physician's prescription or without prescription as over-the-counter (OTC) drug. But without knowing proper dose and formulation it may cause cancer, liver damage, heart failure, low blood circulation in the brain and many other problems.

The maximum dose within a 24-hour period must never be exceeded. Even taking one or two more tablets than recommended can cause serious liver damage and possibly death. An adult person can ingest maximum 4,000 mg paracetamol in 24 hours. People usually think that higher dose provides better effect, but that is totally wrong. The doses are related to age.

Adults and children over 16: The usual dose of paracetamol is 2 tablets (each tablet 500mg). Swallow the tablets whole with a drink of water in empty stomach or after meal but other NSAID like aspirin, ibuprofen should not be taken at empty stomach because these may cause bleeding. Wait at least 4 hours before taking another dose. Do not take more than 4 doses in 24-hour period.

Use in children aged 10 to 15: Take one tablet every four to six hours when necessary to a maximum of four doses in 24 hours.

Use in children under 10: A 500mg tablets should not be given to children under 10 years of age.

If you take more paracetamol then you should talk to a doctor or pharmacist even if you feel well. Too much paracetamol can cause delayed, serious liver damage. If you forget to take a dose at the right time, take it as soon as you remember. However, do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose.

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SIBLING BULLYING MAKES PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY

People who were bullied by siblings during childhood are up to three times more likely to develop psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia in early adulthood, according to new research by the University of Warwick.

The researchers found that the more frequently children are involved in sibling bullying either as bully, victim or both the more likely they are to develop a psychotic disorder. Children who are victimized both at home and by school peers are even worse off being four times more likely to develop psychotic disorders than those not involved in bullying at all.

The researchers conclude that parents and health professionals should be made aware of the long-term mental health consequences that sibling bullying may have and that interventions must be developed in order to reduce and even prevent this form of aggression within families.

Psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder cause abnormal thoughts, perceptions and often involve hallucinations or delusions. Sufferers often experience severe distress and changes in behavior and mood and have a much increased risk of suicide and health problems.



Story Source:
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