

Interview

Fatty liver disease is killing us!

DR TAREQ SALAHUDDIN

The number of patients with various liver diseases are on the rise. Some of them are related to the lifestyle, some with metabolic syndrome and other factors. However, having a proper knowledge of these diseases are important.

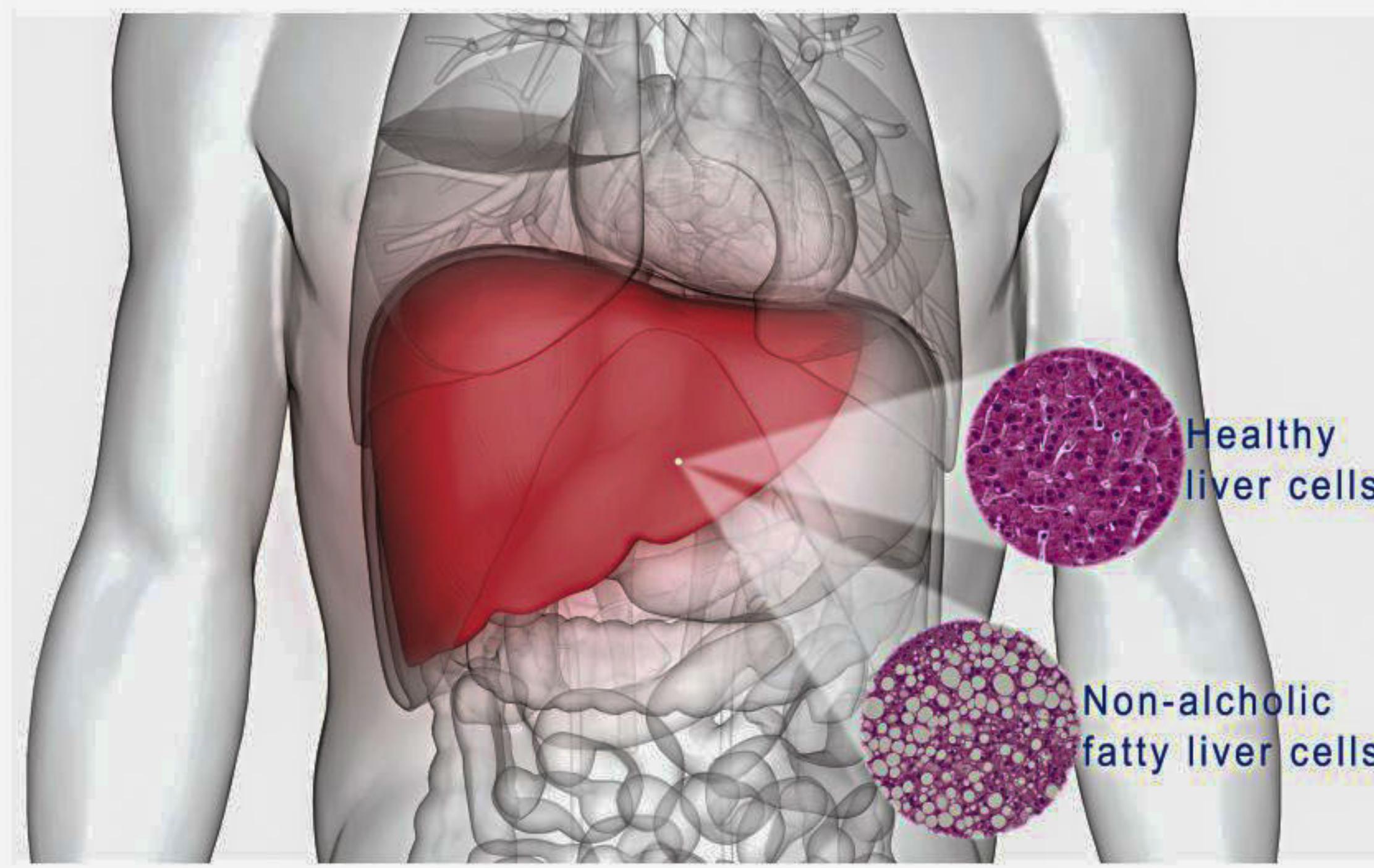
Recently, we talked about different disease of the hepatobiliary system, the cancer of liver and liver transplant with Dr Desmond Wai, Senior Consultant, Gastroenterology & Hepatology, Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital, Singapore. His clinical interests include transplant hepatology and gastroenterology. He had received numerous awards.

Liver disease can be inherited (genetic) or caused by a variety of factors that damage the liver, such as viruses and alcohol use. Obesity is also associated with liver damage.

Over time, damage to the liver results in scarring (cirrhosis), which can lead to liver failure, a life-threatening condition.

Dr Desmond informed that almost half of the population in Bangladesh are suffering from fatty liver. This disease is going to be the most common liver disease in coming years.

Fatty liver is also known as hepatic steatosis. It happens



when fat builds up in the liver. Having small amounts of fat in the liver is normal, but too much can become a health problem.

Liver is the second largest organ in our body. It helps process nutrients from food and drinks and filters harmful substances from your blood.

Too much fat in your liver can cause liver inflammation, which can damage the liver and create scarring. In severe cases, this scarring can lead to liver failure.

When fatty liver develops in someone who drinks a lot of alcohol, it is known as alcoholic fatty liver disease (AFLD).

In someone who does not drink a lot of alcohol, it is known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).

Fatty liver disease is a slowly progressive disease. The patients are usually obese, have high cholesterol, high triglyceride, high sugar and hypertension. But if the patients do not control

their diet, ultimately all the risk factors become an individual problem. In a sense, fatty liver could be considered as the early sign of liver problems.

We are fortunate that alcoholic fatty liver is not so common among Bangladeshi population due to religious culture. But Dr Desmond criticised the carbohydrate-based food habit and he underscored on the change of food habit and timing of food.

Apart from fatty liver disease, hepatitis is common in Bangladeshi population. But if people are vaccinated, hepatitis can be prevented very effectively. Hygiene can play a big role to keep some waterborne hepatitis away.

Talking about liver cancer, he said that it is a common among all the cancers. Recent development in immunotherapy helps liver cancer patients a lot in addition to chemo and radiotherapy.

Living donor liver transplants show promises, but choosing the patients for transplant is very crucial, informed Dr Way. If the patient can survive the initial period following the transplant surgery, then the survival rate is very good. Unlike kidney transplant, graft tissue rejection is not a big problem for liver transplant, because liver is a very tolerant organ. With the development of immunosuppressant drugs, it is very easy now a days to keep the patients out of danger from tissue rejection.

But if we can take care of our liver by healthy lifestyle methods, that would be the best way to deal with the diseases.

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To see the full interview, please visit https://youtu.be/_3gNEM0_Sk4

MENTAL HEALTH



Do you feel low?

DR SAYEDUL ASHRAF

If you are told to judge yourself, will you call yourself an optimist or a pessimist? If your thoughts circle around negative outcomes, you automatically focus on the negative aspects of life and anticipate something worst is going to be happen, then most likely you are a pessimist!

Pessimism is a mental attitude, and guess what? Yes, you can gradually overcome this attitude! Many well-known researchers and philosophers published many ways of it.

Here I will share with you some useful ways to kill your negativity:

1. Keep optimist companions. We are greatly influenced by our surroundings; you will see the change yourself soon!

2. Try to find out positivity in each incident and in every human being. Believe me, there are positive qualities everywhere!

3. Work on your self-esteem. Write the negative beliefs about yourself in a paper and destroy that after you are done. You will feel better once you are regularly on to it!

4. Challenge your negative thoughts! Ask yourself, "am I really right?" or "am I overestimating?"

5. Stop comparing and finding others flaws. It will not take you anywhere. Focus on the gifts you have in life rather than what you do not have.

6. Start the day with a positive thought and a piece of good work.

7. Do not emphasise on the problem, focus on solutions. Seek help and information from proper sources if you cannot solve it alone.

8. Admit your own faults but do not blame yourself for everything. You are a human, not a robot that can end everything always perfectly.

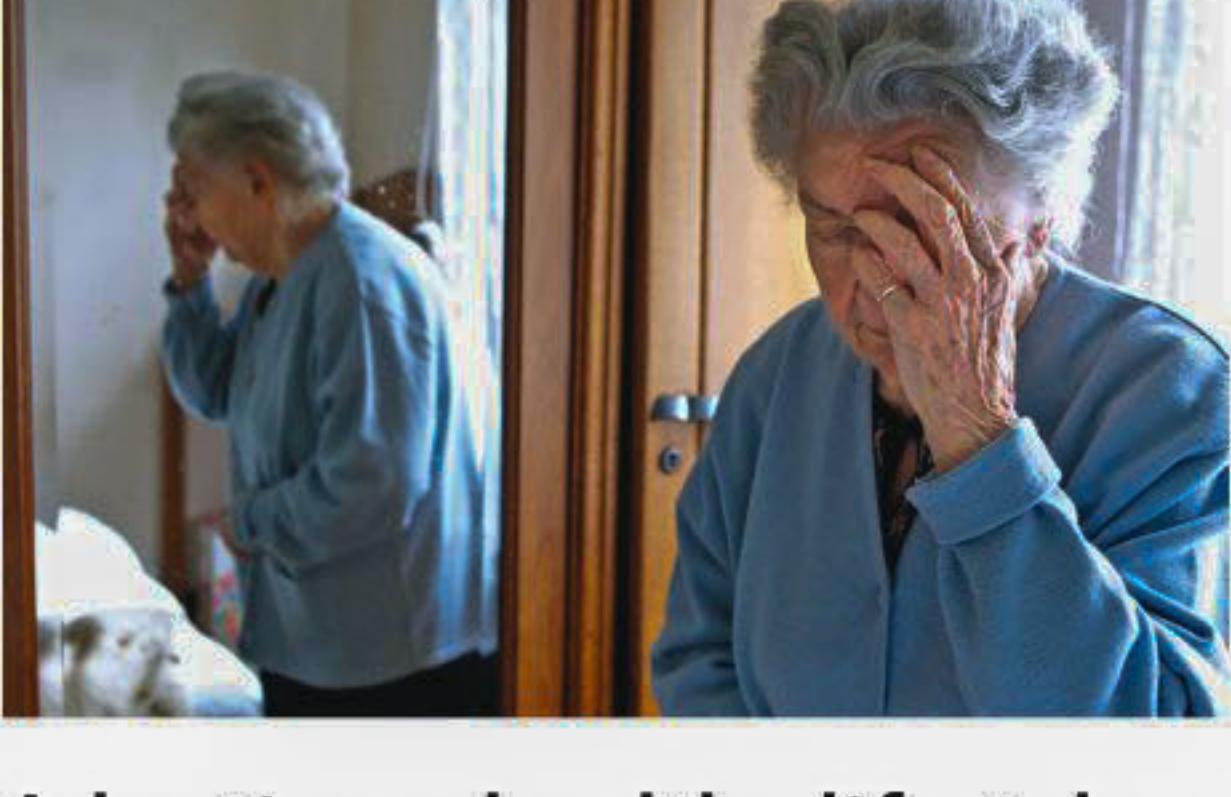
9. Do not regret over past too much. You cannot change your past, but can modify the present and future.

10. Practice self-care. Take care of your sleep and diet patterns. Exercise every day for 30 minutes. You will feel much better.

The main obstacle during overcoming pessimism is in our mind. Finding optimistic views are precious for self, because – "What consumes your mind, controls your life."

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HEALTH bulletin



Adopting a healthy lifestyle helps reduce the risk of dementia

People can reduce their risk of dementia by getting regular exercise, not smoking, avoiding harmful use of alcohol, controlling their weight, eating a healthy diet, and maintaining healthy blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels, according to a new guidelines issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The Guidelines provide the knowledge base for health-care providers to advise patients on what they can do to help prevent cognitive decline and dementia. They will also be useful for governments, policy-makers and planning authorities to guide them in developing policy and designing programmes that encourage healthy lifestyles.

WHO's Global Dementia Observatory, launched in December 2017, is a compilation of information about country activities and resources for dementia, such as national plans, dementia-friendly initiatives, awareness campaigns and facilities for care. Data from 21 countries, including Bangladesh, Chile, France, Japan, Jordan and Togo, have already been included, with a total of 80 countries now engaged in providing data.

The importance of probiotics

DR MD MOSARRAF HOSSAIN

Probiotics are organisms such as bacteria or yeast that are believed to improve health. They are available in supplements and foods. The idea of taking live bacteria or yeast may seem strange at first. After all, we take antibiotics to fight bacteria. But our bodies naturally teem with such organisms.

The digestive system is home to more than 500 different types of bacteria. They help keep the intestines healthy and assist in digesting food. They are also believed to help the immune system.

How do probiotics work?

Researchers believe that some digestive disorders happen when the balance of friendly bacteria in the intestines becomes disturbed. This can happen after an infection or after taking antibiotics. Intestinal problems can also arise when the lining of the intestines is damaged. Taking probiotics may help.

Probiotics and the immune system

There are also evidence that probiotics help maintain a strong immune system. In societies with very good hygiene, we have seen a sharp increase in autoimmune and allergic diseases. That may be because the immune system is not being properly challenged by pathogenic organisms. Introducing friendly bacteria in the form of probiotics is believed to challenge the immune system in healthy ways.

Probiotics may help lots of ailments

Although they are still being studied, probiotics may help several specific illnesses. Probiotics are most effective for treating childhood



diarrhoea, ulcerative colitis and necrotising enterocolitis (a type of infection and inflammation of the intestines mostly seen in infants); preventing antibiotic-associated diarrhoea and infectious diarrhea, pouchitis (an inflammation of the intestines that can follow intestinal surgery); treating and preventing eczema associated with cow's milk allergy and helping the immune system. Probiotics can improve intestinal function and maintain the integrity of the lining of the intestines. These friendly organisms may also help fight bacteria that cause diarrhoea.

Cautions about probiotics

For the most part, taking probiotics is safe and causes few side effects. People in cultures around the world have been eating yoghurt, cheeses and other foods containing live cultures for centuries. Still, probiotics may be dangerous for people with weakened immune systems or serious illnesses. One study found that patients with severe pancreatitis who were given

probiotics had a higher risk of death.

Which is better, probiotic foods or supplements?

Probiotics come in many forms including powders, tablets, capsules and foods such as yoghurts. The form you take them in does not matter, experts say, as long as it contains enough organisms to grow in the intestines. Experts say the effective dose varies, from as little as 50 million to as many as 1 trillion live cells per dose.

Specific probiotic organisms appear to be useful for particular illnesses. The bacteria *Lactobacillus reuteri* and the yeast *Saccharomyces boulardii* have been shown to be helpful for infectious diarrhoea in children, for example. But there is no evidence that *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, which is used in many commercial yoghurts, has any benefits for diarrhoea.

Advice on choosing a probiotic supplement

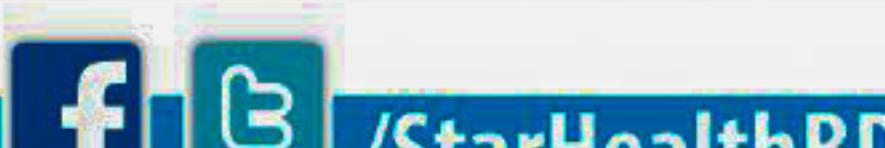
The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate probiotics as it does prescription drugs because probiotics are in the same category as food and supplements. For now, the best advice is to choose products from well-known companies, especially those that have been tested in research studies. Reliable products should say the name of the precise probiotics they contain, as well as how many organisms a single dose provides. Many products also provide information on the scientific studies they use for their recommendations.

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Staying hydrated in summer

With some simple precautions and sensible eating habits, we can manage to not let the heat get to us! This summer, get ahead on hydration with these smart tips.

- Drink enough water to prevent thirst.
- Monitor the colour of urine. It should be pale yellow. Dark yellow, smelly or cloudy urine is one of the signs of dehydration.
- For low moderation exercise, it is ideal to drink a little water before, during and after exercise.
- If you are exercising in extreme heat conditions, supplement water with sports drinks which contain electrolytes.
- Try wearing light coloured clothes in the summer months. Light colour reflects heat.
- Eat at least 4 to 5 cups of fruits and vegetable in a day. Fruits and vegetables contain a water component and potassium that is vital to the body.
- While outdoors protect yourself with sunglasses, sunscreen or wear a hat to prevent direct heat.
- Include a bottle of water in your work bag so that you have access to drinking water anytime, anywhere.
- If you are feeling tired, experiencing dizziness or have a headache in summer, try drinking water as the first step.



How to fast safely during Ramadan

The way to approach your diet during fasting is similar to the way you should be eating outside Ramadan. You should have a balanced diet. Dr. Mahroof recommends approaching the fast with discipline, otherwise an opportunity to lose weight and be healthier could be wasted. "The underlying message behind Ramadan is self-discipline and self-control," he says. "This shouldn't fall apart at the end of the day."

Aim for a balanced diet

Those observing the fast should have at least two meals a day: the pre-dawn meal (Suhoor) and a meal at dusk (Iftar). It should contain foods from all the major food groups:

- fruit and vegetables
- bread, cereals and potatoes
- meat, fish or alternatives
- milk and dairy foods
- foods containing fat and sugar

Try to limit the amount of sugary foods you eat and instead include healthier sources of carbohydrate in your diet, such as wholegrains, potatoes, vegetables, fruits, legumes, and lower fat dairy products. Foods high in fibre can help to keep your bowels healthy and add bulk to your meal, helping you to feel full.

Foods to avoid

- deep-fried foods – such as pakoras, samosas and fried dumplings
- high-sugar and high-fat foods – including sweets such as gulab jamun, rasgulla and balushahi
- high-fat cooked foods – such as parathas, oily curries and greasy pastries

Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning while cooking

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste. When breathed in, it can make you unwell and can kill. Cooking for large numbers of people using oversized pots on gas stoves has been shown to cause the build-up of carbon monoxide in some homes, particularly those that aren't well ventilated. If you're planning to cater for large numbers of people at your home – for example, at a pre- or post-Ramadan gathering – it's important that you don't use oversized pots on your gas stove and don't place foil around the burners.



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