

# Postpartum mood issues are real

PROF DR HAMIDA BEGUM

Postpartum mood disorders are commonly found among some newly delivered mothers, either 2-3 days after delivery or sometimes after 2-3 months. These include a spectrum of problems ranging from minor (baby blue or postpartum blue) to serious psychiatric problems (postpartum psychosis). Sometimes family members are engaged with the newborn and these problems are overlooked or neglected/unattended and most of the time get serious.

Women's body undergoes not only physical but also emotional, psychological changes due to interactions of different hormones and chemical neurotransmitters. The intricate balance system can be disturbed by biological or environmental factors as chronic illness, trauma, sudden death or bad news of near ones, domestic violence, family or personal history of anxiety or depressive illnesses, attention deficit hyperactive disorders (ADHD), obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), serious childhood trauma, difficult delivery or extreme unhealthy family environment even sometimes too much loneliness might trigger to outburst these problems. It can affect all reproductive age groups irrespective of education, social or economic level.



As many as 1 in 5 expecting or new mums and 1 in 10 will experience perinatal anxiety or depression. Expecting or new dads can also suffer from pregnancy-related mood problems as when their partner is pregnant, his testosterone level drops and produces higher levels of oestrogen, cortisol and even prolactin. So the father might feel stressed, aggressive or depressed along with social factors like more responsibility and lack of sleep also contribute to it.

Postpartum or baby blue: Almost 50% of women suffer from this transient state of mental state, which occurs

2-3 days after delivery. It is manifested by unusual tiredness, crying, irritation, too much stress and some negative feeling towards the baby. It usually persists for 2 weeks. Reassurance, close family members' love and affection, attention and care cure this condition. If it persists for more than 2 weeks it can progress to postpartum depression.

Postpartum depression: Usually occurs within 2-3 months following delivery or miscarriage in 10-20% of women - similar to postpartum blue but it is a painful condition that lasts longer and hampers her daily activities. Signs include sadness,

apathy, not showing interest in anything or anyone even to her newborn baby, less sleep/less food intake or too much eating, unusual tiredness or hatred to others and/or constant crying. When severe enough she can hurt herself or the baby and even maybe suicidal. So, as soon as symptoms manifest it is better to seek consultation from a psychiatrist as she needs medication and psychotherapy.

Postpartum psychosis: This is the extreme form of the postpartum disorder. It usually occurs within the 1st week after delivery. Every 1 in 500-1000 mothers with a past or family

history of such illness will have this. It is manifested by unusual attitude and behaviour, delusion, hallucination, unnecessary laughter or crying and insomnia. As postpartum psychosis is a medical emergency, it is best to seek treatment from a psychiatrist as soon as possible. Medication, psychotherapy and counselling are extremely helpful.

A mother has to undergo a great many physical changes, mental stress and psychosomatic outbursts but all these can be relieved if she received warm greetings, proper empathy and sympathy from close family members especially from her husband. Simple kind words, sincere assistance in her daily activities like cooking, taking care of the baby - these mean a lot especially for a new mother in a completely new environment where she is trying to cope up. Family members must remember to not unduly criticise or try to find faults in every activity, never compare with other mothers and using harsh comments to willingly hurt her, rather should try to praise her to sustain her personality, self-respect and to keep her overall functioning. It is our sacred responsibility to help every mother to lead a healthy decent life by giving her proper care, attention and affection.

The writer is a Gynaecologist and Obstetrician working at Widad University College, Malaysia. E-mail: hmdbgm1@gmail.com

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Tap water access linked to dengue risk

Dengue virus is among growing number of mosquito-borne viruses that have adapted to spread in urban environments and are spreading with the increasing rate of urbanisation. Researchers reporting in PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases have recently identified tap water access in densely populated neighborhoods as a strong predictor of dengue risk in the city of Delhi.

It is estimated that 3.5 billion people are at risk of dengue virus, the most widespread arbovirus. While previous attempts at controlling dengue virus with insecticides at egg-laying sites have been successful in the past, new strategies are needed to target hotspots of dengue virus transmission in urban areas.

In the new work, Olivier Telle of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) at Paris-Sorbonne, Richard Paul from Institut Pasteur, France, and colleagues conducted surveys across the city of Delhi to analyse social and environmental risk factors for dengue virus. They measured dengue antibodies in 2,107 individuals and mosquito larval prevalence in 18 areas within Delhi as well as socio-economic factors across the city.

Across the individuals tested in the city, 7.6% were positive for dengue virus antibodies, indicating recent or current infection. Colonies with very poor access to tap water, with less than 61% of houses having access, were associated with a higher risk of exposure to the virus and were the only type of area to register dengue cases between epidemics. However, despite relatively low mosquito densities, wealthy colonies had a higher risk of recent infection than intermediary colonies, likely reflecting the import of dengue virus by commuters coming into the high-income areas during the day.

"Improved access to tap water could lead to a reduction in dengue, not only for those directly affected but for the general population," the researchers say. "Targeted intervention through mosquito control in winter in the socially disadvantaged areas could offer a rational strategy for optimising control efforts."

## HEALTH bulletin



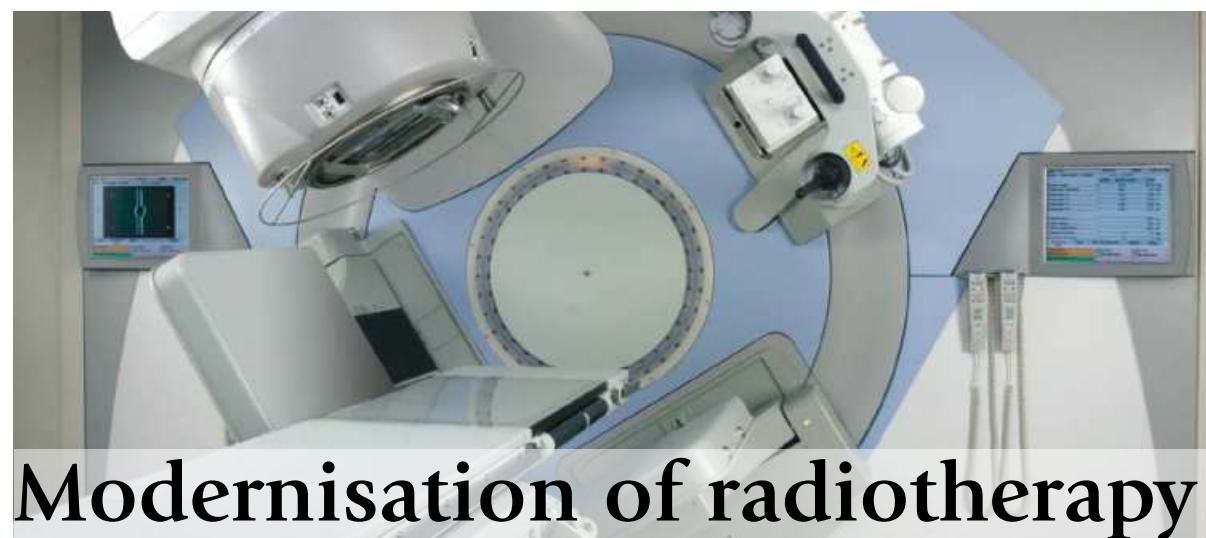
### Over 64% of people in Bangladesh would take the COVID-19 vaccine

A survey conducted by the University of Maryland, in partnership with Facebook shows that in Bangladesh over 64% people that responded to the survey intend to take the COVID-19 vaccine -- says a press release.

People's willingness to get a COVID-19 vaccine varies widely across the world. For example, the average intent in Vietnam is 86%, compared to 72% in India.

As part of Facebook's Data for Good programme, Facebook is collaborating with academic partners to invite a sample of people on Facebook to participate in off-platform surveys. With over 39 million responses to date in 200 countries and territories since April 2020, this is one of the largest surveys to help health researchers better monitor and forecast the spread of COVID-19.

The surveys are conducted by academic partners and Facebook does not receive individual survey responses.



## Modernisation of radiotherapy

DR MD RASHID UN NABI

Modernisation in radiation treatment has been brought on by Stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT). Stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) and stereotactic radiation therapy (SRT). Radiation or radiotherapy has played an important role against cancer, no matter what stage. Since the 19th century deep X-ray therapy and after that cobalt-60 machine and now the modern linear accelerator has been used to fight cancer.

The new version of the linear accelerator can provide a previously 30-day treatment in just 5 days. With the linear accelerator's true beam version, a highly advanced four-dimensional CT scanner machine is required. It is used to record the patient's respiration and through the help of the computer, the radiation oncologist and medical physicist team deduce a high-quality treatment plan which gets completed in the treatment planning computer.

Afterwards, that treatment is applied by a radiation technologist. Therefore it can be seen that this treatment is continuing like a chain

and there can be no cracks on the way. If there are any lapses it can be harmful to the patient. This ultra-modern treatment started in Bangladesh in 2014.

SBRT mainly used to focus on the lungs and liver but now it can be applied to the prostate as well. But the problem is that this type of treatment is only applicable for the early stages of cancer. For example, treatment is possible if the size of the disease in the lungs is a maximum of 4 cm, better if the tumour is in the periphery of the lungs and it is not possible to treat if it has spread throughout the lungs. In case of the liver, the largest size of the tumour can be realistically 6 cm. In case of patients for whom other treatments like targeted therapy did not work, this SBRT treatment has shown great success in liver cancer.

SRT and SRS have been widely used for brain cancer treatment. The same condition is applicable here as well, the size of the tumour has to be small, and it has to be away from the brain stem which is the main part of the brain.

In SBRT treatment high-energy X-rays from true beam linear

accelerator are used which is 5 times stronger than a normal linear accelerator X-ray beam. Through SRS treatment method the whole treatment can be completed in a day. It is extremely important for cancer to be at an early stage but Bangladeshi patients get to apprehend cancer at a later stage.

Also, through the help of four-dimensional CT scanner, breathing can be stopped for 30 seconds to treat cancer on the left side of the breast. Due to the heart being there, in many cases giving radiation in an angular way could be harmful to the heart. This treatment is necessary to reduce the radiation dose in the heart. Because of this treatment, a very low amount of rays reach the heart and hearts of the breast cancer patients stay well.

These advanced treatment methods can massively help Bangladeshi patients. The precision and efficiency of this treatment is very good and also has low risks to other healthy organs.

The writer is a Senior Consultant at the Department of Radiation Oncology, United Hospital Limited, Dhaka.



### Cycle rally held in the Capital to mark World Cancer Day 2021

STAR HEALTH REPORT

A bicycle rally was jointly organised by Eminence Associates for Social Development in collaboration with Bangladesh Non-Communicable Disease Forum (BNCDF) in front of the National Parliament House recently to celebrate World Cancer Day 2021 and create public awareness about cancer, says a press release.

Worldwide, 15 million people die each year from non-communicable diseases (NCDs). In terms of physical risk, economic impact, and medical expenses, cancer is one of the most harmful of NCDs.

At present, about 1.5 million people are suffering from cancer in Bangladesh. Eminence is working on non-communicable diseases in Bangladesh since 2003. In its continuation, this cycle rally was organised to create cancer awareness and increase responsiveness in cancer prevention and treatment at the national level.

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