

The origins of COVID-19

SHAKEEL MAHMOOD

The World Health Organisation (WHO) team on its visit to the Chinese city of Wuhan, where the outbreak first emerged at a seafood market in late 2019, said the team's work had uncovered new information. The WHO said that there was still insufficient evidence to determine how the virus entered Wuhan, but that it was clear it was circulating elsewhere in Wuhan at the same time. WHO ruled out the lab leak and accepting that COVID-19 could have originated outside of China. The team also considered that the first human transmission took place across the border in Laos or Vietnam.

According to Professor Tom Jefferson at the University of Oxford, pointed that rather than originating in China, COVID-19 may have been lying dormant across the world until emerging under favourable environmental condition. Traces of COVID-19 found in sewage samples from Spain, Italy, and Brazil, which pre-date its discovery in China. Recent reports suggest that this virus might have been responsible for a spike in pneumonia cases in France, and few researchers believe it could have entered Wuhan from Europe.

In 1918, around 30% of the population of Western Samoa died of the Spanish flu, and they had not had any communication with the outside world. "The explanation for this could only be that these agents do not come or go anywhere. They are always

here and something ignites them, maybe human density or environmental conditions, and this is what we should be looking for," he added. Coronavirus traces found in Spanish sewage samples from March 2019.

An internationally renowned medical microbiologist and

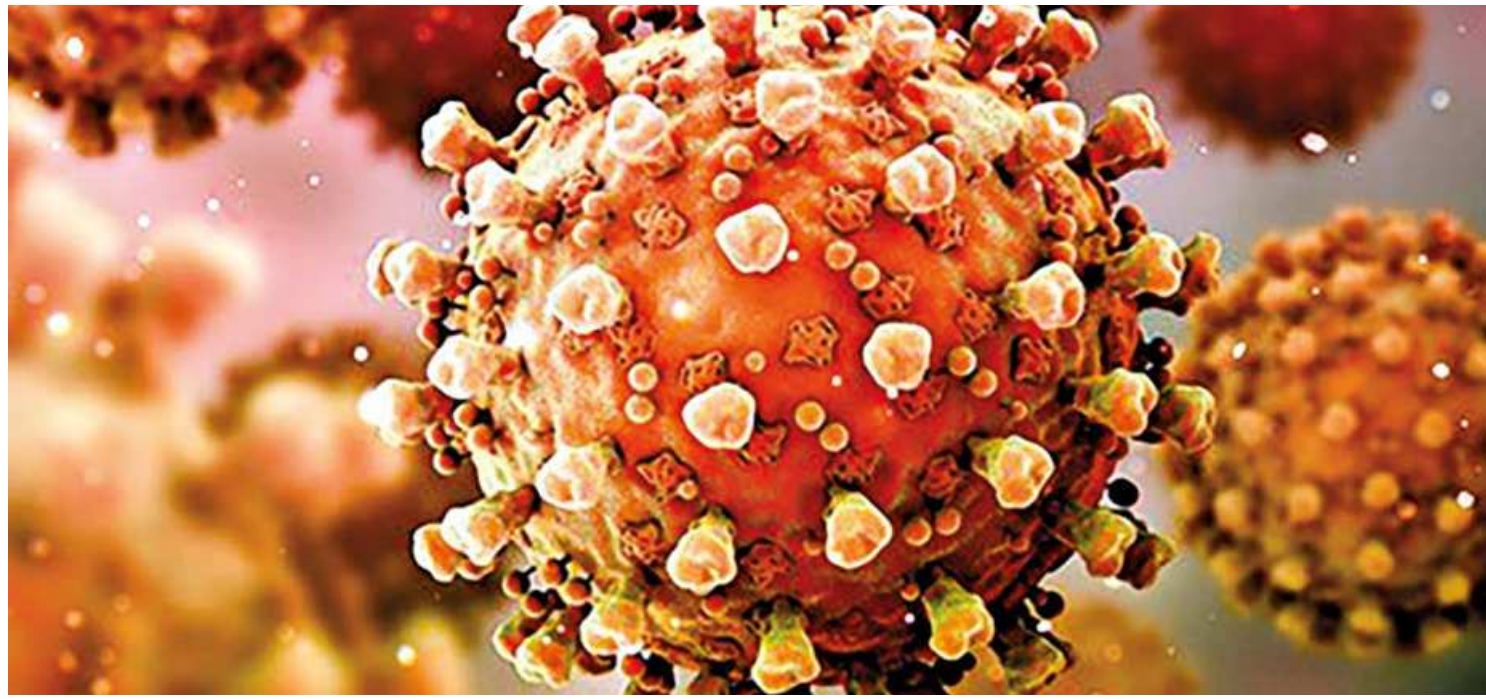
immuno-electron microscopy in Bangladesh in 1978.

Professor Choudhury mentioned in his book 'Modern Medical Microbiology' in the section 'Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Diseases' that "the myth that infectious diseases are being controlled and

is quite obvious that microbes can strike us back whenever the delicate ecological balance is disturbed".

Professor Choudhury's prediction, University of Oxford Professor's observation and recent WHO findings in Wuhan - all theories are similar. 21 years

humans will suffer more in the future from microbes. Human behaviour needs to be changed when it comes to environmental issues. It is an injustice to nature, in other words, not doing a natural justice to nature. The relationship between humans and nature should be harmless.



recipient of the first-ever Independence Day Award of Bangladesh, the late Major General Mahmudur Rahman Choudhury was an eminent medical scientist and physician of Bangladesh. The late Professor Emeritus Dr Mahmudur Rahman Choudhury was a pioneer of

are fading away has evidently been found to be incorrect. There exist definite indications that alterations, which we make in our lifestyles and environment, could have profound impacts on the dynamic biological changes in the microbial world. The results can be disastrous. It

ago, Professor Choudhury was correct, since he speculated that this might happen if we do not keep the ecological balance intact. Hence, it is evident that to eradicate this paradox of pandemic, the ecological balance needs to be restored in the global atmosphere, otherwise,

"Do no harm" - not only to humans but also to nature. It appears that human behavioural change is the key to prevent all domains of infections by viruses and microbes.

The writer is a PhD Candidate at the University of Newcastle, Australia. E-mail: shakeel.mahmood@uon.edu.au

DID YOU KNOW?



5 fruits and vegetables a day may be optimal in terms of survival

STAR HEALTH DESK

Five servings of fruits and vegetables a day — in particular, three vegetables and two fruits — provide the greatest mortality benefit, according to an observational study and meta-analysis in Circulation.

Researchers analysed results from the Nurses' Health Study and Health Professionals Follow-Up Study. Over 100,000 people regularly completed food-frequency questionnaires and were followed for up to 30 years. During that time, nearly a third of participants died.

After multivariable adjustment, the greatest mortality benefit was seen for five servings of produce a day, compared with two servings (hazard ratio, 0.88).

Eating more than five servings a day was not associated with greater risk reductions. Of note, increased intake of starchy vegetables, fruit juices, or potatoes was not associated with lower mortality. Results were similar in a meta-analysis of roughly 25 studies.

We often become dependent on the supplements for vitamins and minerals rather than exploring in the natural sources. Sometimes, we are confused how much should we take on a regular basis. Moreover, various forms of food adulteration (for preservation, adding colour and for other reasons) have made it difficult to depend on the fruits from natural sources.

Editorialists in the journal conclude however: "In the post COVID-19 world, where diets and other health behaviours have been adversely impacted due to lockdowns, more, not less, needs to be done to tackle the epidemic of unhealthy eating."

HEALTH bulletin



Even in polluted areas, regular physical activity is an effective strategy to prevent diabetes

New research published in *Diabetologia* (the journal of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes [EASD]) shows that regular physical activity is a safe diabetes prevention strategy for people residing in relatively polluted regions.

The authors say: "We found that high levels of habitual physical activity combined with low levels of chronic PM2.5 exposure were associated with a lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes (T2D), whereas low levels of habitual physical activity combined with high levels of chronic PM2.5 exposure were associated with a higher risk of developing T2D."

They further emphasise that "the benefits of habitual physical activity on T2D remained stable in participants with different levels of PM2.5 exposure." Additional analysis showed that the effect on diabetes risk seemed to be more pronounced for higher levels of pollution that it was for lower levels of physical activity.

The findings suggest that habitual physical activity is a safe strategy for diabetes prevention for people who reside in relatively polluted areas and should be promoted. The study reinforces the importance of air pollution mitigation for diabetes prevention.

Zinc: The magic mineral

DR TAUHIDA RAHMAN EREEN

Zinc is among the most talked about health and skin benefitting micronutrients in town right now. Naturally occurring powerful mineral zinc is a key ingredient to overall bodily health.

Essential mineral zinc performs healthy cell metabolism, optimises the immune system and acts smartly as a common cold fighter. Zinc also helps the body protein synthesis and wound healing process. The functions of zinc include antioxidant activity.

Trace mineral zinc acts as a co-factor for certain enzymes involved in the effective functioning of the antioxidant defence system. It helps protect against the oxidative stress caused by free radicals. Several studies find a strong correlation between low serum zinc levels and severe COVID-19. COVID-19 patients showed significantly lower zinc levels when compared to healthy controls.

Are you aiming to improve the skin's well-being? Your skin needs the mineral zinc to stay moisturised and healthy. One of the best-known minerals for skin and hair health is zinc. Zinc mineral works as an ultraviolet (UV) protective filter, that protects your skin from UV damage. Zinc oxide is present in nano form in a variety of hair and skincare products. Support your immune system with zinc fortified food and supplements with antiviral properties. Oral zinc sulphate supplementation (10mg/kg/day) is an adjuvant therapy of viral wart.

Zinc pyrithione is an active ingredient in anti-dandruff shampoo. Zinc pyrithione containing shampoo is intended to kill dandruff-causing fungi that live on the scalp. Zinc helps control sebum production, it has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. You can take it orally and also use topically in your acne-fighting arsenal. Zinc oxide paste is

the ideal diaper rash protectant. It soothes your baby's sensitive skin and gives it a barrier effect.

The micronutrient zinc is naturally found in many food sources such as fish, oyster, mushroom, whole grain cereals, and dairy products. In general, nuts, beans and seeds are good choices because they have zinc. lobster is delicious food that is rich in zinc.

Our body needs only a very small amount zinc each day. Adequate daily intake of zinc is 11 mg for men and 8 mg for women. Poor dietary intake, ageing process, inadequate absorption, increased loss are responsible for zinc deficiency.

Eating foods rich in zinc and incorporating a supplement into your diet may harmonise the issue. People who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or following a plant-based diet require extra zinc. However, as always, check with a doctor before using a supplement.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Seminar held on DPP-4 inhibitors and COVID-19 related outcomes among patients with T2D

STAR HEALTH REPORT

A scientific seminar on "DPP-4 inhibitors and COVID-19 related outcomes among patients with type 2 diabetes (T2D)" was organised by NIPRO JMI Pharma Ltd. at the capital recently, says a press release. Distinguished Professor AK Azad Khan, President of Bangladesh Diabetic Association, was the chief guest at the event.

The session speaker, renowned endocrinologist Dr Md Feroz Amin presented that the use of DPP-4 inhibitors in COVID-19 patients with diabetes might significantly lower the probability of all-cause mortality and severe manifestations of COVID-19.

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SHE PLAYS DIFFERENT ROLES *in* YOUR LIFE

International Women's Day
8 March

Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world

As countries respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, women must have the opportunity to play a full role in shaping the pivotal decisions being made right now - choices that will affect the wellbeing of people.

A woman in any form must be taken care of
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