

Is walking for exercise beneficial for people with knee osteoarthritis?

STAR HEALTH DESK

Does walking for exercise have a beneficial long-term effect in patients with knee osteoarthritis (OA)? In a study, researchers used data from the Osteoarthritis Initiative — a U.S. community-based, prospective cohort study — to address this question in 1,200 participants (mean age, 63) with radiographic evidence of knee OA.

About three quarters of participants reported walking for exercise somewhat regularly since age 50. During 4 years of follow-up, walkers were less likely than nonwalkers to report new frequent knee pain; however, among participants who already had frequent knee pain, walking was not associated with improved symptoms during follow-up. Walking also was associated with slightly less likelihood of OA progression on serial radiographs, but the statistical significance of this finding was borderline. These analyses were adjusted for age, sex, and radiographic extent of OA.

Based on these findings, we could reasonably advise people with knee OA and infrequent or non-severe pain that walking for exercise might prevent or delay progression of symptoms. Because a long-term randomised trial of walking for exercise (vs. no walking) is unlikely to happen, observational studies will have to suffice. Reverse causality is a potential problem in a study like this (i.e., more advanced OA can deter people from walking), but the researchers took some analytic steps to minimise this effect.

Source: Arthritis Rheumatol 2022 Oct; 74:1660



The high cost of affordable junk food

M. TANJIM HASAN KHAN

Dhaka is often attributed as the rickshaw capital of the world. However, now-a-days it seems the city is trying its utmost to become the world's junk-food capital as well. While the junk-food industry provides employment to approximately 2.3 million people countrywide, the harm that it causes to our health and eventually to our economy in the long run, cannot just be brushed aside.

A study in Iran showed that having fast-food more than twice a week can lead to metabolic syndromes, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and even death from coronary heart diseases. Junk-food has also been proven to cause various mental illnesses, including depression, anxiety and insomnia.

A study by the European Commission revealed that on an average, each European country spends 7% of their GDP every year to cure diseases that are caused by

unhealthy foods.

According to UN Habitat, Dhaka is the most crowded and one of the most poorly designed cities in the world. Consequently, there is barely any ideal place where the city dwellers can spend some quality time with their friends or families. As a result, most residents are forced to opt for the restaurants and the food courts that have mushroomed over the years for their excursions.

But this creates a very problematic scenario. According to a study published in a PLOS journal, almost 8.4 million Bangladeshi adults had diabetes in 2019 which is likely to almost double by 2045. To add to the woes, some doctors of Bangladesh have already warned that diabetes and cardiovascular diseases are well on their way to becoming the epidemics and the junk-food industry is the biggest enabler of this impending health crisis.

Therefore, to avoid a potential health emergency, we must take immediate measures to restrain the

booming unhealthy food businesses in Dhaka. Massive awareness campaigns should be launched to make people conscious about the harmful impacts of fast-food. Large scale studies must be phased into discern the real toll of the health problems that are caused by junk-food.

Based on the sestudies, a comprehensive tax structure should be devised, which will specifically target the fast-food industry. The government should also put significantly more emphasis on developing the infrastructures of the public parks in Dhaka.

Open spaces where people can have some quality time without being surrounded by unhealthy food, should be established in every neighborhood. We have been hearing "health is wealth" ever since our childhood - it is time we truly ponder the meaning of this saying.

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HAVE A NICE DAY The art of becoming better

DR RUBAUL MURSHED

"Beauty is Truth, Truth is beauty." The beauty of humanity shows the real truth of nature. And this truth bears a vital factor named 'Kindness' - that takes one to tranquility. It is a tree with many branches; like, forgiveness, gratitude, humbleness and 'culture of giving'. Among these good-deeds, 'Culture of Giving' carries a substantial meaning that brings completeness in one's life. Some of us think 'giving' means 'giving money'. But, it means giving more than just money.

In fact, a culture of giving could be a way of life. It could be donating time - to build a shelter for a needy person or offering teaching to 'those who have less' without commercial benefits or spending time with senior citizens and building relationships and eventually to support our community life together.

Whatever we donate, we can give so much more than just material things. Like, a sincere smile, a listening ear or the smallest act of caring and love are unparalleled. Real endowment is doing something good for someone who may never find out.

A wide range of research has linked different forms of giving to better health, even among the sick and elderly. In another study, researchers suggest that one reason for this sound health and longevity is that it helps decrease stress, which is associated with a variety of health problems. Studies reported that people who provided social support to others had lower blood pressure than participants who did not. Scientists have found that when people 'give' - it activates regions of the brain associated with pleasure, social connection, and trust, creating a "warm glow" effect. Scientists also believe that unselfish deeds release endorphins, producing the positive feeling known as the "helper's high."

When people think of donors, they talk about Ambani or Buffet or big names in entertainment like Oprah? But the interesting fact is that the majority of charitable dollars come from individual donors who we seldom see across media. It is true, 'no one has become poor by giving'.

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Vitiligo does not spread by touch

TAWHID ISLAM & DR MUHAMMAD TOREQUL ISLAM

Vitiligo commonly known as Sheti in Bangladesh, is a depigmentation disorder affects the skin melanocyte cells by our own immune system - mainly the T lymphocyte. Many factors are associated for vitiligo. In Bangladesh, many people assume it a contagious disease - but scientifically it is a myth. It occurs for the hyperactivity of the body's defense system that kills the melanin producing cells.

To raise awareness every year 25th June is considered as the world vitiligo day - the funeral day of Michele Jackson, the renowned music star who suffered from vitiligo and was criticised for his condition and that tempted him to do plastic surgery of his face.

Since vitiligo patients deal with a lot mental crisis as the society does not accept them as they are, we need to accept the vitiligo patients as a normal member of our society and help them to lead their life with our support and proper treatment.

It is an autoimmune disease

that means our own immune system recognise the melanocyte cells (it produce melanin which determine the skin color) as antigen or something harmful for the body by mistake. So there might be a genetic modification which leads to this faulty recognising process of T lymphocyte (a component of immune system).

According to a professor



of Massachusetts Institute of Medicine, Jhon E. Harris, we can hold the problem by systemic suppression of the immune system to a certain level. The researcher group found that if the immune system is suppressed to a kidney transplant level plus UV-B therapy brings a fruitful result (in kidney transplantation immune system

could affect the newly added kidney, so the action of it turned to lower to protect the new kidney).

On the other hand, mouse model vitiligo study demonstrated that interferon gamma IFN-g neutralisation results no CD8+ T cells accumulation on the skin that results no depigmentation. The IFN-g inactivation can be achieved by JAK (Janus Kinase) inhibiting agents which are effective to re-pigmentation of the skin.

Unfortunately, this skin disorder is reoccurring; most of the patients have experienced the problem re-occur. As it is the result of autoimmune problem, it would be helpful to avoid the food staff which is allergic to individuals. Before taking any medication like JAK inhibitors it is highly recommended to consult with a dermatologist.

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Golden slumbers: shorter sleep in later life linked with multi-morbidity

STAR HEALTH DESK

Adults over 50 who sleep for five hours or less per night have a greater risk of developing more than one chronic disease when compared to their peers who sleep seven hours, according to a study.

Sleep duration has been associated with individual chronic diseases but less is known about its association with multimorbidity — the co-occurrence of two or more chronic conditions. Séverine Sabia, of Université Paris Cité, Inserm and University College London, and colleagues took data from a cohort study established in 1985, and looked at self-reported sleep duration, measured at age 50, 60 and 70.

Of 7,864 healthy participants with sleep duration data at 50, those



who slept five hours or less had a 30% greater risk of multimorbidity compared with those who slept seven hours. At 60, those who slept five hours or less had a 32% greater risk and at 70 had a 40% greater

risk compared with seven hours per night. Shorter sleep at age 50 was also associated with a 25% higher risk of mortality, mainly due to its association with an increased risk of chronic disease.

At age 60 and 70, sleeping longer than nine hours or longer was associated with higher rates of multiple chronic diseases, but there were only 122 participants who slept this long, and the longer sleep could be attributed to the chronic diseases themselves.

Sabia adds, "Our study based on data on more than 7,000 men and women followed up for 25 years reports short sleep duration from mid to late life to be associated with risk of chronic disease and subsequent multimorbidity."

Source: PLOS Medicine

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