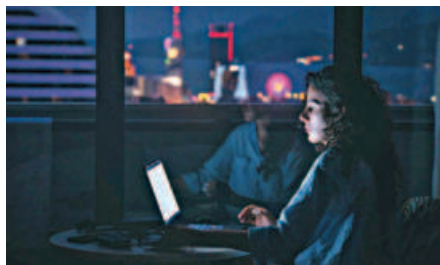


Night owls or early birds: Who gets Diabetes?

A recent study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine has revealed that women who identify with an “evening chronotype,” meaning they prefer staying up late at night, face a higher risk of developing diabetes compared to those with a “morning chronotype,” who prefer going to bed early. This association remains significant even after accounting for other known risk factors.

The term “evening chronotype” refers to individuals who naturally lean towards later sleep and activity patterns, while “morning chronotype” individuals prefer earlier sleep and wake times. Evening chronotypes have previously been linked to unhealthy lifestyle choices, obesity, and disrupted blood sugar control, but



this study provides important prospective data.

The research involved approximately 64,000 middle-aged women, predominantly white and middle-class, with no history of diabetes. Half of these women did not neatly fit into either chronotype category, indicating variability in their sleep patterns.

The findings showed that those with an evening chronotype were 1.5 times more likely to engage in unhealthy lifestyle behaviours compared to those with a morning chronotype. Even more concerning, during an average follow-up period of 7.4 years, women with an evening chronotype were significantly more likely to develop diabetes, with a 20% increased risk.

In essence, this study highlights that a preference for staying up late at night, or having an evening chronotype, appears to be an independent risk factor for diabetes among women.

While it is crucial to address lifestyle factors, this research emphasises the importance of understanding individual sleep patterns and their impact on health, offering valuable insights for diabetes prevention and management strategies.



Plea for protecting health in Gaza

STAR HEALTH DESK

The World Health Organisation (WHO) joined the wider United Nations in appealing to Israel to immediately rescind orders for the evacuation of over 1 million people living north of Wadi Gaza. A mass evacuation would be disastrous—for patients, health workers, and other civilians left behind or caught in the mass movement.

With ongoing airstrikes and closed borders, civilians have no safe place to go. Almost half of the population of Gaza is under 18 years of age. With dwindling supplies of safe food, clean water, and health services and without adequate shelter, children and adults, including the elderly, will all be at heightened risk of disease.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health has informed WHO that it is impossible to evacuate vulnerable hospital patients without endangering their lives. Vulnerable patients include those who are critically injured or dependent on life support. Moving them amid hostilities puts their lives at immediate risk.

The two Ministry of Health hospitals in the north of Gaza that continue to be operational have greatly exceeded their combined 760-bed capacity with severe overcrowding. Of the thousands of patients with injuries and other conditions receiving care in hospitals, there are hundreds who are severely wounded and over 100 who require critical care. These are the sickest of the sick. Many thousands more, also with wounds or other health needs, cannot access any kind of care.

The compressed timeframe, complex transport logistics, damaged roads, and, above all, a lack of supportive care during transport all add to the difficulty of moving them.

Furthermore, the four Ministry of Health

hospitals in the south of Gaza are already at or beyond capacity and lack the critical care capacity and supplies needed to treat additional patients.

The lack of medical supplies is already endangering patients and hampering health workers. Supplies that WHO had pre-positioned in Gaza have mostly been consumed.

On October 9, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus met with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who agreed to a WHO request to facilitate the delivery of health and other humanitarian supplies from WHO to Gaza via the Rafah crossing.

WHO has prepared medical supplies in its logistics hub in Dubai and is ready to deliver them to Aareesh, Egypt—just 20 minutes from Rafah—as soon as a landing permit is received. The supplies would be enough to care for more than 300,000 patients with a range of wounds and diseases.

WHO asks for the immediate establishment of a humanitarian corridor for their onward, safe delivery to health care facilities in Gaza, including via Rafah.

WHO reiterates its plea for humanitarian access for life-saving supplies and the delivery of fuel, water, and food; for protection under international humanitarian law for civilians, health workers, and health infrastructure; and ultimately, for an end to hostilities and violence.

Conflicts are increasingly becoming a major health concern globally. They are not merely the international political issues. World leaders need to show their commitment to resolve and restore the global population's health.

Source: World Health Organisation

Gestational diabetes tied to higher risk of premature death

According to a recent study in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), researchers have found a concerning link between gestational diabetes (GD) and an increased risk of early death. This study, based on data from the Nurses' Health Study, observed 91,000 women who had been pregnant at age 18 or older. Of these, approximately 7% reported experiencing GD during their pregnancies.

Participants with a history of GD faced a 30% higher risk of all-cause mortality compared to those without GD. This association remained consistent regardless of whether they subsequently developed type 2 diabetes. The risk was even more pronounced for those who



had experienced GD in more than one pregnancy, had high blood pressure during pregnancy, or gave birth prematurely.

Additionally, individuals with a history of GD were found to have a heightened risk of death related to cardiovascular issues and non-cancer-related health complications.

The authors of the study suggest that women who develop GD during pregnancy might already have underlying health issues, such as systemic inflammation, insulin resistance, or endothelial dysfunction, which could predispose them to chronic diseases.

HAVE A NICE DAY Judging character

DR RUBAUL MURSHED

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Character is essential, as it determines how we think, feel, and behave and then determines the results we get in life. If we want to live a good and happy life, it has been said that our character will be like a tree, and our reputation will remain in its shadow. Character could be the most crucial factor in judging someone. In psychoanalysis, the term 'character' has been used to refer to configurations of behavioural traits. The character resembles personality, but the character has distinctively moral implications.

A person of good character is someone who acts morally or ethically. Personality refers to value judgements about a person's ethical behaviour, whereas character is how individuals think, sense, and act. Nevertheless, the relationship between the two is incredibly symbiotic.

According to new psychological research, kindness, passion, and hope are also highly important character strengths. A good character helps to develop a winning personality. It is the backbone of a perfect personality, which attracts other people. This type of character, with honesty, is more important than one's talent. Furthermore, environmental factors, such as upbringing, culture, and life events, also greatly influence character and personality.

Our conduct and behaviour serve as the driving force. Observing how people treat service workers like waiters, chauffeurs, or domestic helping hands reveals their character. A person with good character treats weaker and deprived individuals with kindness. Having individuals with strong character contributes to a better society.

Someone once said that people with academic successes or talent are admired, people of wealth and power are worshipped, but only people of "character" are trusted. Without character, they rarely stay very long.

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Dry season defence: tackling Aedes mosquitoes effectively

HASAN MOHAMMAD AL-AMIN

Aedes aegypti mosquitoes are primarily responsible for the transmission of dengue, Zika, and chikungunya viruses. Controlling the breeding sites of Aedes mosquitoes during dry seasons can reduce mosquito populations when the rainy season arrives. If we had been able to control the mosquito breeding sites during the dry season in 2022, we might not have witnessed the dengue epidemic in 2023. Mosquito control organisations need to respond immediately, especially during dry seasons.



Particularly in the dry season, it is crucial to focus on controlling the population of Aedes aegypti mosquitoes. Unlike other mosquito species, female Aedes aegypti mosquitoes do not lay their eggs directly in water. Instead, they lay eggs in containers that can hold water, one egg at a time. These eggs are usually placed on the inner walls of containers, where they await

favourable conditions to hatch.

To initiate hatching, they first need to dry out and then undergo a process of rehydration, meaning they require water. Eggs can remain viable in open environments for several months or even a year. When these eggs come into contact with water, they rehydrate and resume oxygen intake, acting as a trigger for their development. Then eggs hatch, and mosquito larvae emerge. Having water available for them allows Aedes aegypti mosquitoes to adapt to environmental changes and quickly resume reproduction when conditions become suitable again.

When the dry season begins with light rain, these eggs start hatching as they come into contact with water. Once they hatch and transform into fully-grown mosquitoes from pupae, they are ready to reproduce during the rainy season. Therefore, once the mosquito population has grown, there is little we can do.

The rainy season creates many favourable breeding grounds for

Aedes mosquitoes, potentially leading to a significant increase in their population. This, in turn, can pose a greater risk of the spread of diseases carried by these mosquitoes. This is why it is crucial to either eliminate or control mosquito breeding sites during the dry season, as this effort will greatly benefit us in the following year.

In particular, the focus should be on maintaining effective control of Aedes aegypti mosquito breeding sites during the dry season. The government should organise extensive public health education and involve the community in the effort to manage mosquito breeding sites effectively.

It is essential for us to take individual initiatives and keep our surroundings clean, both in our immediate vicinity and on rooftops. If we do not become aware even after the high number of cases and deaths in 2023, we may continue to face such situations in the future.

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Babesiosis-associated neurological complications on the rise in endemic areas

In areas where babesiosis (an illness caused by a parasite of the *Babesia spp.*, which infects and destroys the red blood cells) is prevalent, neurological complications associated with this disease are not uncommon.

The protozoa typically spread it through the bite of infected ticks. These ticks are the primary vectors for transmitting the disease. It can occur globally. The disease commonly presents with symptoms resembling a flu-like illness, but neurological symptoms have been observed, especially in individuals over 50 years of age or those with weakened immune systems.

Researchers at Yale-New Haven Hospital conducted a study to investigate the characteristics and neurological manifestations of patients diagnosed with babesiosis. The symptoms ranged from acute cerebrovascular disease, syncope (fainting), ataxia (loss of coordination), confusion or delirium, headache, facial weakness, impaired consciousness, nerve pain, tremor, vision impairment, vertigo, language deficits, and seizures.

The severity of these symptoms was linked to the degree of parasitemia (the presence of the parasite in the blood).



Alarming mental health crisis amidst World Mental Health Day observances

STAR HEALTH REPORT

October 10th is World Mental Health Day. This year's theme was "Mental health is a universal human right".

Bangladesh Association of Psychiatrists (BAP) conducts various month-long programmes on the occasion of the day every year. The publication of pamphlets outlining the importance of the day in daily newspapers, rallies, round table discussions, meet-the-press events, scientific seminars, and free medical camps are a few of these initiatives.

The Association organised a Meet the Press programme, which took place on October 9 at Dhaka Reporters Unity in observance of World Mental Health Day, with the collaboration of Synovia Pharma, says a press release.

A joint study by the National Institute of Mental Health, Dhaka, and the World Health Organisation showed 18% of the adult population of Bangladesh and 13% of children and adolescents are affected by mental illness. About 92% of the affected people did not receive any treatment.

The speakers pointed out the immense importance of print and electronic media in increasing awareness among people about the prevention and treatment of mental diseases.

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