

How environment shapes women's well-being

For many women, the environment they live in profoundly shapes their overall health and happiness. Factors like home conditions, access to financial resources, and environmental health—such as air quality and pollution levels—play a critical role in their well-being. Younger women, in particular, often report feeling the strain of poor environmental conditions, which may explain why many are at the forefront of climate change activism. Their desire to improve their surroundings reflects their drive for a better quality of life.

As women age, however, their satisfaction with life generally increases, especially in areas related to their environment. Older women often report greater peace and contentment, likely due to improved living conditions and



more stability in their surroundings. This heightened environmental quality of life becomes a source of value for many, inspiring them to preserve it for future generations. This desire to protect and sustain their environment may even drive older women to advocate for long-term environmental solutions.

To enhance women's well-being, it is essential to focus on improving the conditions in which they live. Policymakers and communities should prioritise initiatives that enhance home environments, reduce pollution, and ensure access to both financial and social resources. In addition, creating opportunities for women to actively influence and shape their surroundings—through community programs or climate action—can empower them to improve both their immediate environment and their broader societal conditions.

By addressing these factors, we can help women of all ages enjoy better health, happiness, and a higher quality of life.

Source: PLOS ONE

Prioritise mental health at work

STAR HEALTH DESK

October 10 was World Mental Health Day. It celebrates awareness for the global community in an empathetic way, with a unifying voice, helping people feel hopeful by empowering them to take action and create lasting change.

There is a vital connection between mental health and work. Safe, healthy working environments can act as a protective factor for mental health. Unhealthy conditions including stigma, discrimination, and exposure to risks like harassment and other poor working conditions, can pose significant risks, affecting mental health, overall quality of life and consequently participation or productivity at work. With 60% of the global population in work, urgent action is needed to ensure work prevents risks to mental health and protects and supports mental health at work.

It is essential for governments, employers, the organisations which represent workers and employers, and other stakeholders responsible for workers' health and safety to work together to improve mental health at work. Action to address mental health at work should be done with the meaningful involvement of workers and their representatives, and persons with lived experience of mental health conditions. By investing efforts and resources in evidence-based approaches and interventions at work, we can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to thrive at work and in life. Let's take action today for a healthier future.

Mental health and work are closely linked. A supportive work environment fosters mental health, providing purpose and stability. But poor working conditions can harm mental well-being, reducing both job satisfaction and productivity.

There are various risks to mental health that workers may face including discrimination, poor working conditions, or limited autonomy. Low paid or insecure jobs often lack adequate protections, leaving workers in these jobs more exposed to psychosocial risks.

Lack of support for people with mental health conditions can negatively impact their self-confidence, enjoyment at work, capacity to work, absences and ability to gain employment. Carers and family members are similarly affected.

Poor mental health can lead to decreased performance, absence from work, and increased staff turnover.

with mental health conditions in the workplace. This means, for example, organizing regular supportive meetings, scheduling frequent breaks, gradually reintroducing workers to tasks, and providing storage for medication.

Employers should provide managers with training to recognize and address stressors in the workplace. Trained managers can effectively support their teams and foster a healthier, more supportive work environment.

Governments, employers, and representative organizations must work together to create policies that prevent mental health risks, promote well-being,



Depression and anxiety alone result in the loss of approximately 12 billion workdays each year.

Stigma and discrimination often prevent people with mental health conditions from seeking help or finding and keeping jobs. Reducing workplace discrimination through awareness, training, and engagement with people living with mental health conditions creates healthier, more inclusive work environments.

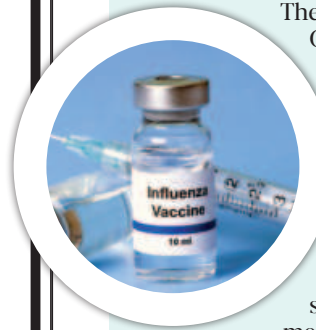
Employers should apply reasonable accommodations to support workers

and build supportive workplaces where mental health is prioritised.

Although governments and employers have the primary responsibility to protect and promote mental health at work, you can take steps to support your own well-being. Learn techniques to manage stress and stay mindful of changes in your mental health. If needed, reach out for support from a trusted friend, family member, colleague, supervisor, or health professional.

Source: World Health Organisation

Recommendations for influenza vaccine



The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced the recommendations for the viral composition of influenza vaccines for the 2025 influenza season in the southern hemisphere. The announcement was made at an information session after a 4-day meeting on the composition of influenza virus vaccines. The meeting is held twice annually, once for the southern and once for the northern hemisphere.

The recommendations issued are used by the national vaccine regulatory agencies and pharmaceutical companies to develop, produce, and license influenza vaccines for the following influenza season. The periodic update of viruses contained in influenza vaccines is necessary for the vaccines to be effective due to the constantly evolving nature of influenza viruses, including those circulating and infecting humans.

The WHO recommends that trivalent vaccines for use in the 2025 southern hemisphere influenza season contain the following:

Egg-based vaccines

- an A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1) pdm09 like virus;
- an A/Croatia/10136RV/2023 (H3N2) like virus; and
- a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage) like virus.

Cell culture-, recombinant protein-, or nucleic acid-based vaccines

- an A/Wisconsin/67/2022 (H1N1) pdm09 like virus;
- an A/District of Columbia/27/2023 (H3N2) like virus; and
- a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage) like virus.

The recommendation for the B/Yamagata lineage component of quadrivalent influenza vaccines remains unchanged from previous recommendations:

- a B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage) like virus

Source: World Health Organisation

Health benefits of COFFEE CONSUMPTION

DR SHAHJADA SELIM

Recent research has revealed unexpected health benefits linked to coffee, despite earlier recommendations to limit intake due to heart disease concerns. Many studies have controlled for factors such as age, sex, and lifestyle influences, allowing researchers to isolate coffee's effects. Notably, a UK study in 2022 found that adults who drank more unsweetened or sugarsweetened coffee had a lower risk of dying from cancer and other causes over a seven-year period, while artificially sweetened coffee showed no notable impact on mortality.

Colorectal cancer prevention: Drinking four or more cups of coffee daily may lower the risk of colorectal cancer by 11-24%.

Endometrial cancer prevention:

According to a study, women consuming four or more cups of coffee daily had a 25% lower risk of developing endometrial cancer compared to those who had just one cup. This reduction increased to 30% when compared to non-coffee drinkers.

Liver cancer and cirrhosis risk reduction:

Research indicates that individuals drinking one or two cups of coffee daily have a lower risk of liver cancer. Those consuming three to four cups had about half the risk, and those drinking five or more cups had about one-third the risk. A Japanese study noted a 76% decrease in liver cancer risk for those consuming at least five cups daily, particularly benefiting those with hepatitis C.

Skin cancer risk reduction: Studies revealed that individuals consuming more than three cups of caffeinated coffee monthly had a 17% lower risk of basal cell carcinoma. Drinking four or more cups daily was linked to a 20% reduced risk of malignant melanoma, the most severe form of skin cancer.



Prevention of type 2 diabetes: In Finland, a study found that men drinking 10 or more cups daily had a 55% lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared to those consuming two or fewer cups. Women in the same category experienced a 79% reduction.

Suicide risk reduction: Two long-term studies showed that each additional cup of coffee consumed daily was associated with a 13% decrease in suicide risk. One study found a 50% lower risk among women who drank two or more cups daily compared to non-coffee drinkers.

Brain health and aging: Research suggested that coffee consumption could enhance cognitive function and slow age-related cognitive decline.

Risks associated with coffee:

Certain risks must be considered. Studies indicate that consuming 300 mg of caffeine (about two to three cups) can decrease fertility and increase the likelihood of low birth weight in infants. Women over 65 who consume more than four cups daily may have a higher risk of hip fractures.

Heart diseases and stroke:

Coffee consumption has potential cardiovascular benefits. Moderate intake is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, with some studies suggesting that drinking 3 to 5 cups a day may decrease heart-related issues. Coffee is rich in antioxidants, which can help mitigate oxidative stress and inflammation.

Overall, coffee consumption appears to provide more health benefits than risks for most individuals. Even one cup daily can reduce the risk of various diseases. However, women trying to conceive, those who are pregnant, and individuals over 65 should consider limiting their coffee intake.

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WHO and TikTok team up for health awareness

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has partnered with TikTok, the popular short-form video platform, to promote reliable, science-based health information. This year-long collaboration reflects WHO's commitment to using digital platforms to enhance global health literacy and foster healthy behaviours in an increasingly digital world.

Social media plays a vital role in shaping health-related decisions, with one in four young adults seeking news on platforms like TikTok. However, misinformation and



malinformation are rampant online, prompting WHO and TikTok to join forces to address these challenges by encouraging the dissemination of evidence-based content and fostering positive health conversations.

Dr Jeremy Farrar, WHO Chief Scientist, stated, "This collaboration can prove to be an inflection point in how platforms can be more socially responsible." By partnering with TikTok, WHO aims to provide credible information and facilitate scientific

discussions to create a healthier future for all.

With over a billion users, TikTok is leveraging its platform to raise health awareness and provide access to trustworthy information. The collaboration will focus on relevant health topics, transforming scientific data into relatable and digestible video content. TikTok's creator training programs will also support influencers in delivering accurate health information.

The partnership aims to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and everyday life, ensuring that health conversations on TikTok are impactful and informed.

Source: World Health Organisation

Dementia Alzheimers and THE SUNDOWNING EFFECT

DR ZUBAIR KHALED HUQ

Dementia itself is not a disease itself, a brain-related disorder. It is a syndrome of symptom complexes like memory impairment, language, and other mental skills. There are mainly four types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, vascular, frontotemporal, and Lewy body dementia. Among all, Alzheimer's disease is the most common. It causes short-term memory loss. In vascular dementia, there is a lack of problem-solving and thinking speed. In frontotemporal personality and language skills are affected.

Signs of dementia are short-term memory loss, forgetting words, and disorientation with time and place. Difficulty in doing familiar works. The bad thing is all of these are progressive and worsening. Alarming thing is the frontotemporal type may start at an earlier age. Alzheimer's type starts late. Talking therapies and anti-depressants are better treatments. Some drugs, like



benzodiazepine, if taken for more than three months, tricyclic antidepressants, and drugs to control overactive bladder, may increase the risk of dementia. Ways to reduce dementia are to pursue education, study throughout life, stop smoking, and socialise more. Drink less alcohol, and your hearing should be checked. The pharmacological agents such as Donepezil, Rivastigmine,

Galantamine, and Memantine do not have conclusive evidence in controlling the symptoms of dementia in the long run.

Sundowning is a behaviour when a person becomes intensely distressed and agitated in the late afternoon; the symptoms may continue throughout the night, making it hard for them to sleep. It is more common in later stages of life. There might be tiredness, hunger, pain, or other unmet physical needs. To address the problem, one should agree with a dementia patient, not shame them rather than distract them.

Reassure them, encourage them to make eye contact, and smile. Reminiscing about events, making their favourite food, playing music that they like, repeating words, showing empathy, handling with care, dignity, love, and affection.

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Rising heat, rising risk: Diarrhoeal cases set to soar in Dhaka

STAR HEALTH REPORT

As one of the most densely populated cities in the world, Dhaka already faces a significant burden from diarrhoeal diseases, driven by factors like overcrowding, poor sanitation, and water contamination. With the looming threat of climate change, these challenges are expected to intensify. Warmer temperatures, irregular rainfall, and increasing humidity could create an environment where waterborne

diseases flourish, straining the city's public health infrastructure.

A recent study, published in PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases and led by researchers from University College London, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr), warns that hospitalisations from diarrhoeal diseases in Dhaka are likely to rise significantly by the year 2100 due to climate change. The study predicts

that even if global efforts keep warming within the 2°C threshold set by the Paris Agreement, hospitalisations will increase by up to 7.4%, with children under five particularly vulnerable.

These findings highlight the growing impact of climate change on public health, underscoring that even moderate increases in global temperature could exacerbate existing health crises. Dhaka, with its high population density and fragile infrastructure, could see worsening water quality and increased disease

transmission as temperatures rise.

The authors stress the importance of strengthening the city's public health systems to cope with the projected rise in diarrhoeal diseases. Addressing sanitation, water safety, and climate resilience will be critical in preventing and managing the anticipated health risks. This study serves as a call to action for both local authorities and global health leaders to prioritise climate adaptation strategies.