

New global guidelines target postpartum bleeding to save mothers' lives

Leading global health organisations have issued new guidelines to prevent and manage postpartum haemorrhage (PPH)—the world's leading cause of maternal death. Launched by WHO, FIGO, and ICM, the recommendations aim to improve early detection, accelerate treatment, and reduce the risk of fatal outcomes.

PPH, or excessive bleeding after childbirth, affects millions of women each year and causes around 45,000 deaths. It can also result in severe long-term health impacts, including organ damage, hysterectomy, and trauma. The new guidelines call for prompt action when blood loss reaches 300 mL combined with abnormal vital signs, replacing the previous 500 mL threshold. Health workers are urged to use calibrated drapes to accurately measure blood loss and respond quickly.

The guidelines introduce the "MOTIVE" bundle of care: massage of the uterus, oxytocic drugs, tranexamic acid, intravenous fluids, vaginal/genital tract examination, and escalation of care. In severe cases, surgery or transfusion may be required.

Prevention is also prioritised, particularly for women with anaemia. Daily iron and folate supplements during pregnancy and intravenous iron in urgent cases are recommended. The guidance discourages routine episiotomies and supports perineal massages to minimise trauma.

Midwives and frontline workers are central to these efforts, with new training tools and practical resources developed to support real-world implementation. The guidelines, launched at the 2025 FIGO World Congress in Cape Town, are part of a broader global strategy to eliminate preventable maternal deaths from PPH by 2030.

SOURCE:

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION



WORLD ANAESTHESIA DAY 2025

Regional anaesthesia: A safer future for postoperative pain control

DR RASHED ASHRAF

Surgery is a life-saving intervention, but the period that follows can be challenging. Severe pain after an operation is not just a source of suffering; it can lead to delayed recovery, increased hospital stays, higher risk of complications such as blood clots, and even long-term chronic pain. Poor pain control also prevents patients from moving freely, coughing effectively, or eating properly—all of which are critical for a smooth recovery.

Traditionally, opioid-based medications (like pethidine, morphine, etc.) were the mainstay of postoperative pain relief. While effective, opioids bring their own risks: nausea, vomiting, constipation, sedation, and in some cases, dependency. These limitations have driven anaesthesiologists worldwide to seek safer, more targeted solutions.

REGIONAL ANAESTHESIA: A TARGETED SOLUTION

Regional anaesthesia involves numbing specific nerves or regions of the body to block pain sensation. Instead of dulling the entire nervous system with strong systemic drugs, regional techniques provide site-specific pain relief with fewer side effects.

Some commonly used regional

anaesthesia techniques include: Epidural and spinal blocks – often used for lower abdominal, pelvic, or lower limb surgeries. Peripheral nerve blocks – targeting individual nerves, such as for knee replacement, shoulder surgery, or arm operations. Truncal blocks – such as the Transversus Abdominis Plane (TAP) block, widely used for abdominal and gynaecological surgeries, including Caesarean sections.

These methods have transformed the way pain is managed after surgery. Patients receiving regional anaesthesia not only report better pain control but also require fewer opioids, recover faster, and return to daily activities sooner.

A GLOBAL MOVEMENT TOWARDS MULTIMODAL ANALGESIA

Modern surgical care embraces the principle of multimodal analgesia—the combination of different pain relief strategies to maximise benefit while minimising risks. Regional anaesthesia has become a cornerstone of this approach. By pairing nerve blocks with non-opioid medications, anaesthesiologists can create individualised plans that ensure patients remain comfortable without heavy reliance on opioids.

This philosophy has been widely adopted in Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) protocols, which are

now standard in many hospitals worldwide. The results speak for themselves: shorter hospital stays, fewer readmissions, and happier patients.

CONTEXT IN BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, regional anaesthesia holds great promise for improving surgical care and reducing the suffering of patients after operations. However, challenges remain. Many district and sub-district hospitals lack ultrasound machines, which are vital for safely performing advanced nerve blocks. At the same time, awareness among patients is still limited—many accept postoperative pain as an unavoidable part of surgery rather than a problem that can and should be solved.

Bridging these gaps requires investment in equipment, training for anaesthesiologists, and community education so patients know to ask about modern pain management options. By doing so, Bangladesh can ensure that more patients benefit from regional anaesthesia, moving closer to the global standard of safe, comfortable, and dignified surgical recovery.

The writer is a Junior Consultant at the Department of General Anaesthesia at United Hospital Limited. Email: rashraf@gmail.com

FOOD UPCYCLING

The missing link in our fight against food insecurity

ABEDA SULTANA

Household food insecurity remains a significant challenge in Bangladesh, particularly for low-income households, driven by high food prices and climate shocks. World Food Day 2025, observed on 16th October, draws critical attention to the global fight against food insecurity.

Food upcycling is the process of turning food that would otherwise be wasted into products that can be eaten. For example, fruit peels can be turned into fibre-rich flour, and leftover rice into snacks. The goal is simple – turning potential waste into nourishment, while supporting livelihoods and protecting the environment.

Bangladesh's long culinary tradition already includes forms of upcycling – from using fish heads for curry, drying leftover rice into pitha, or making chutneys from fruit skins. These are time-tested examples of resourceful cooking, deeply rooted in culture. However, what is missing today is a structured approach that can scale up these practices into a modern food security strategy.

If Bangladesh were to adopt food upcycling on a larger scale, the benefits could be far-reaching. Small-scale processing centres could collect unsold or imperfect produce and turn them into dried foods, sauces, or powders. Urban households could be encouraged to repurpose leftovers creatively through awareness campaigns and community programmes.

However, scaling up food upcycling in Bangladesh requires policy support, training, and innovation. Food safety standards, labelling guidelines for upcycled products, and small grants for entrepreneurs could build consumer confidence and market trust. Educational campaigns – especially those connecting youth and older generations – can promote food wisdom rooted in both tradition and sustainability.

The writer is a dietician. Email: abeda.mishu@gmail.com



PHYSIOTHERAPY

Post Chikungunya joints and muscle pain management

DR MD FARUQU L ISLAM

Mr Rahman, 56 years old, came to the hospital with a complaint of severe pain in several joints, causing difficulties in walking and other daily activities. The patient said he had experienced a fever that lasted 2 to 3 days. After examination it was diagnosed as a case of post-chikungunya. Like Mr Rahman, many people are suffering from severe pain in different joints and muscles, especially after Chikungunya fever. Every day many of them are seeking relief from this obnoxious pain and discomfort in their lives.

HOW WILL YOU UNDERSTAND?

- Joint pain is a common and very often longer symptom after chikungunya fever, lasting for months or years.
- Pain due to inflammation (tenderness, swelling and will feel hot in the area), which can affect joints like hands, wrists, ankles, and feet.
- Joints may be swollen, stiff, and sometimes restricted in movement.
- Occasional fatigue, headache, nausea, muscle pain and rash.

Management

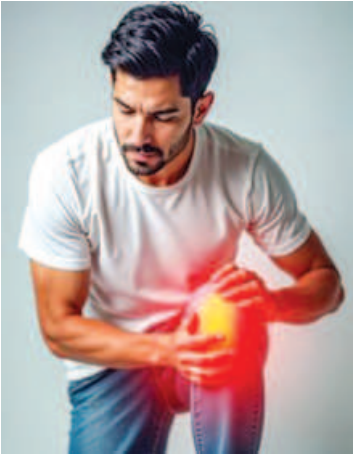
A physiotherapist will assess as per the protocol and will ensure both physical and functional limitations as you gripe.

- Ice packs: you can apply a cold pack wrapped in a cloth to the affected areas; that will relieve your pain and swelling.
- Warm baths: sometimes (especially when not swelling) warm bathwater can also help soothe inflamed and sore joints.
- Sufficient water intake: Water intake and sufficient hydration because dehydration can worsen joint aches.
- Therapeutic exercise – there are several types of exercise which can be planned and designed by a physiotherapist for you and can be practised based on complaints, like mild exercises, joint mobilisation, muscle stretching and strengthening exercises around the joints, which help dramatically reduce pain and joint swelling. Moreover, they improve your daily movements and other functions quickly.

HOW CAN YOU PREVENT BEING INFECTED?

- Chikungunya virus is transmitted by infected female mosquitoes, especially in daylight hours.
 - Standing unused storage water around the home and environment can cause growth.
 - Patients suspected of having CHIKV infection should avoid getting mosquito bites during the first
- Proper awareness and accurate management of chikungunya outbreaks can be formulated; a multidisciplinary intervention approach ought to be introduced from the beginning of the disease. Specific exercises and physiotherapy could be a very important treatment strategy to relieve pain and other joint and muscle discomfort.

The writer is Vice Principal at Dhaka College of Physiotherapy (DCPT), Dhaka. Email: faruqch6@gmail.com



Vitiligo in children may signal hidden risks of hearing loss

Emerging research highlights a surprising link between vitiligo in children and an increased risk of hearing loss. Though vitiligo is widely recognised for its impact on skin pigmentation, this new evidence suggests its effects may reach deeper—extending to the auditory system.

The findings indicate that children with vitiligo may be more vulnerable to certain types of hearing impairment, particularly those affecting the inner ear. While these children often show no outward signs of ear problems, subtle damage within the auditory pathways could lead to gradual or unnoticed hearing loss over time.

Experts believe that the same cells affected by vitiligo in the skin—melanocytes—also play a role in the inner ear. When these cells are compromised, it may interfere with normal hearing function. Although this connection has been suspected in adults, it is the first time such a strong association has been observed in children.

Importantly, the research does not suggest that every child with vitiligo will experience hearing problems. However, it does raise awareness of the need for early screening and monitoring. Hearing loss in childhood can have lasting consequences, especially in language development, learning, and social engagement.

Clinicians are now encouraged to take a more holistic view of vitiligo, not just as a cosmetic or dermatological issue but as a condition that may require broader medical attention. Regular hearing checks could make a significant difference, ensuring children with vitiligo receive timely support to thrive both in and outside the classroom.

SOURCE: JAMA NETWORK OPEN



Harnessing markets for rural resilience in Bangladesh

The Daily Star (TDS): How is iDE Bangladesh's private sector engagement strategy addressing key development challenges, and what could deeper public-private partnerships bring?

Sameer Karki (SK): At iDE Bangladesh, we see the private sector as a primary engine of inclusive development that can address today's toughest challenges. Our market systems approach aligns commercial incentives with social outcomes by building business models that serve low-income consumers by powering entrepreneurs. We focus on making the benefits clear for each community instead of using one-size-fits all approaches. Every area has its own needs, so we design solutions that make sense locally and create real, lasting impact.

Through agriculture, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), clean energy, and nutrition initiatives, we help local enterprises reach rural customers with affordable products that stimulate local economies. Deeper partnerships with the government would bridge regulatory and financing gaps, give private sector confidence to invest in underserved areas, and accelerate rural focused enterprises.

TDS: What are the main difficulties in working with the private sector in remote or underserved markets, and how is iDE addressing scale, sustainability, and inclusion?

SK: The biggest challenges are thin markets, weak infrastructure, and high-risk aversion among businesses. Many private sectors still view rural Bangladesh as commercially unviable due to low purchasing power and costly distribution networks. iDE tackles these barriers by demonstrating that inclusive business can also be profitable. We co-design market solutions with local entrepreneurs—helping them understand customer demand, reduce business risks, and access finance. We link them with manufacturers, financial institutions, and digital platforms to strengthen their value chains and expand market reach.

Our experience shows that real change comes from building durable market systems, not temporary project structures. By supporting local enterprises to grow, connect, and compete, we foster scale and sustainability while ensuring that

women and marginalized groups are integral to economic participation—not an afterthought.

TDS: Could you describe a recent example where collaboration with businesses delivered measurable improvements for rural households?

SK: In the past three years, iDE has partnered with and supported more than 8,000 rural enterprises across sectors, including sanitation, agriculture, nutrition and clean energy.

Through these partnerships, over 250,000 farmers have gained access to affordable, labour-saving



Our focus is on solutions that fit local realities, helping households manage risk and protect income. By embedding resilience within private-sector business models and prioritizing those most affected by shocks—particularly women and small producers—our aim is to keep markets adaptive, inclusive, and low-carbon, positioning rural enterprises as key drivers of Bangladesh's green transition.

TDS: What role should NGOs play in shaping Bangladesh's development priorities and building effective cooperation with government and the private sector?

SK: The development sector should act as a facilitator—linking innovation to policy and markets to

Sameer Karki
Country Director,
iDE Bangladesh

inclusion. Our role is to create trusted spaces where government, business, and communities co-design practical solutions that work on the ground. The goal is not to replace system actors but to demonstrate scalable models that public and private partners can adopt and sustain. As Bangladesh moves toward middle-income status, the development sector must transition from direct delivery to enabling systemic change, mobilizing private investment, and upholding accountability. Sustained progress will depend on collaborative ecosystems where each actor plays to its strengths, communicates openly, and leverages all available resources, including those from markets, to tackle the complex challenges of today.

iDE, a global nonprofit organisation in 12 countries since 1984, drives poverty reduction through market-driven solutions in Bangladesh, scaling agriculture, WASH, climate resilience, clean energy, and women's empowerment.

This content has been published under 'Catalyzing Markets' - a media campaign jointly initiated by iDE Bangladesh and The Daily Star. This interview is conducted by Shams Rashid Tonmoy.