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From the Editor's Desk



Dear Reader,
Life.

Life is a journey. Starting as a growing fetus, we tumble into the invigorating and energy-filled years of childhood, saunter into our risk-taking periods of adolescence, climb that peak of adulthood and finally roll down the hill into the wise years of old age. However, we would not be able to start nor end this journey were it not for our health.

Staying healthy should be a habit - it cannot just be picked up like a completed, ready-to-use product on a supermarket shelf and used right away. We need to constantly work on it, by cultivating it. Throughout the process, it is always beneficial to have regular encouraging reminders – like Whitecoats! We've handpicked articles with the hope of aiding you to move forward and work towards adapting a healthier lifestyle, and overcoming the challenges that we're all most likely to encounter in our lives.

This would never have been possible without our dedicated team who have worked tirelessly from researching on all the information, to running around to coordinate things. Our sincere gratitude goes out to each and every one of them. We could not have asked for a better team to work with – Asanteni Sana! A special thank you goes to our designers, Dr. Sibtain Moledina and Dr. Khadija Bhimji, for keeping up with our demands and schedule!

Of course, you would not be holding this in your hands without the generosity of our sponsors! Their support is an ode to establishing healthier practices in our community. Every accomplishment we actualize from our efforts will be partly due to your continued backing. May the Almighty bless you all abundantly.

We hope you enjoy this as much as we enjoyed creating it! Should you have any queries or suggestions, we welcome them happily and await your feedback via email at whitecoats.mhi@gmail.com.

Here's to a healthy you, a healthy us and a healthy community!

Maryam Mohamedali & Dr. Shaneabbas Jaffer
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Death from a doctor's view

Mahdi Health Initiative (MHI) is a team of young and energetic health professionals that was formed after meeting with the president of KSIJ in Ramadhan 1438/August, 2016.

The KSI community of Dar-es-Salaam is blessed to have the highest number of professionals from various fields of health and medicine including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dental surgeons, radiographers, physiotherapists and psychologists. We have amongst us specialists like physicians, pediatricians, emergency physicians, ophthalmologists and ENT surgeons as well. The goal of MHI is not only to serve the Shias, but the local population too in order to build a physically and mentally healthy community in preparation for the arrival of the Awaited Saviour Imam al Mahdi (atfs)



To date, MHI has organized several events and programs such as breast cancer screening campaigns, health talks and seminars at the KSI mosque, Dental and vision checkups at Husayni Madrasah to mention a few. In, 2016, a team was formed to compile and analyze the community deaths information in order to identify common and preventable causes of death within the community and address them accordingly.

In the last two years, MHI has also collaborated with various organizations such as Bilal comprehensive school for a children's health screening, Lions club of Dar-es-salaam for health

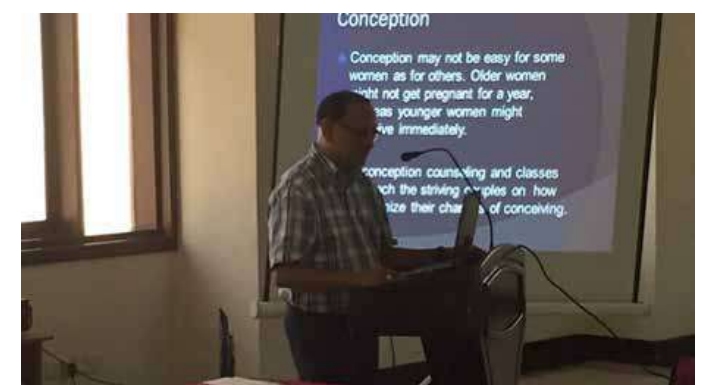


screening camps in orphanages and WhoisHussain team for screening of nursery and primary school students in Mkuranga.

Within the community, doctors and nurses from MHI are always available to provide First Aid and voluntary medical services during Blood donation camps, Muharram Majalis and Sports events.

Currently, MHI is working on projects to address the pandemic of non-communicable diseases such as Diabetes, Hypertension and Obesity. We also have plans in the pipeline to address Tobacco use, Drug & Alcohol abuse as well as other mental health problems within the community.

Alongside this magazine, MHI uses various other platforms of social media to disseminate health information on common medical conditions to the public, as we hope to create awareness and promote healthier lifestyles among the people. ■



From Tummy to Mummy

By: Sabira A Versi

The journey of motherhood is really exciting as it brings to the families great joys of having a new member added into the family. Along the course of pregnancy, mothers undergo a surplus of changes, which may be very uncomfortable, worrisome or even stressful. This brief article will bring to you the 'normal' changes during pregnancy and a few warning signs that will need the mothers to rush to their doctors.

How do I know I am Pregnant? - A missed period is usually the earliest sign of pregnancy. This may be accompanied by a few other physical symptoms like mild cramping around the tummy area and bleeding. If any of the above happens to you, you may perform a home pregnancy test and if it's positive, Eureka! It's time to call your doctor and get ready for an exciting journey.

First Trimester - This refers to the first 3 months of pregnancy, which are usually complemented by the greatest changes. Firstly, you will feel very tired and may need to sleep longer than usual. Have short naps during the day to energize yourself. This fatigue is commonly due to having your body adjust to all the pregnancy related body changes.

You may also experience a heartburn, which is because the muscles that break down food become more relaxed and as the pregnancy hormone, progesterone kicks in, there is relaxation of the intestines which leads to constipation, gas and bloating. Your doctor may give you some stool softeners or fiber supplements. Make sure you drink lots of water too.

There are some changes that occur in breathing. Here, there is an upward movement of the diaphragm (bottom part of your chest) as a result of the enlarging uterus (area in the tummy where the baby lives and grows). Hence, the breathing may be deeper and could be more rapid. If you experience trouble breathing or have difficulty breathing, it is necessary that you visit your doctor.

Vaginal Changes - The lining of your vagina becomes thicker and less sensitive. You may notice a thin and white discharge and sometimes some mild vaginal bleeding which is normal and really common during pregnancy. Be sure to get to your doctor if the bleeding is heavy, painful, has some clots or is prolonged. Also, as the pH level (degree of acidity or alkalinity) of the vagina changes, you may become more prone to getting a 'thrush' which is noted by some whitish flat coloration which cannot be removed by washing or scrapping.

Urinary System - As the growing belly applies pressure on the bladder and the pregnancy hormone, progesterone relaxes your urinary bladder, you will notice an increase in the number of times you need to go to pee.



Blood System - The total amount of blood volume increases and may cause something called 'dilutional anemia.' Therefore, don't be alarmed if there is a small drop in the iron level of your blood. Accordingly, your doctor may give you additional iron tablets when necessary. Also the clotting ability of your blood is increased during pregnancy hence you must inform your doctor if you have had any previous history of varicose veins or are on any medications. Furthermore, as the protein levels in your body decrease you may notice some swelling in your legs. It is necessary that you show this to your doctor as it may be a sign of high blood pressure in pregnancy.

Here is a summary of the pretty much uncomfortable changes in pregnancy:

1st Trimester: Nausea and vomiting, breast pain, lower abdomen cramping.

2nd Trimester: Baby's movements (kicks) and a visibly large belly. It's the time to get a wardrobe makeover. Swelling of the feet is noticeable.

3rd Trimester: Anxiety, a little pain when the baby moves and the bladder effects with increased number of times you may need to pee.

Here below are a few situations whereby you may need to visit your doctor IMMEDIATELY:

1. If you feel that your baby has not been kicking
2. If you notice a sudden gush of water from your vagina- when your 'water breaks'
3. If you notices bleeding with clots and pain
4. If you have a severe headache with any visual disturbances and leg swelling in your third trimester
5. If you have severe nausea and vomiting and you can't

actually eat or drink anything.

6. If you have sustained some trauma on your tummy or you have fallen down

Pregnancy is a beautiful journey. It is filled with great experiences and every pregnancy is different from the previous. Embrace the journey to motherhood with love and positivity. Communicate with your partner and/or any loved one about your experiences. They will definitely be of great support and may be able to guide you along the course. Have regular doctor visits and do the tests that they write for you. Don't be shy to ask your doctor any question. More importantly, don't google everything and neither should you believe everything google tells you.

All the best in your journey! ■

Breastfeeding

By: Sakina Teja

"Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination." [Holy Quran 31:14]

"Breastfeeding saves lives" and "Breast is best!" are well-known slogans for physicians and women. Many paediatricians (children's doctors) recommend breastfeeding as the sole source of nutrition for your baby for about 6 months and can be continued for as long as both mother and baby desire it.

This article will help explain the process and benefits of breast feeding.

Breast feeding is not simply receiving a meal but it is intensely engaging a child and the mother in a dynamic and biological dialogue.

It is a process of physical, biochemical, psychosocial exchange. It is designed for transferring of much needed nutrients from the mother to the child, as well as building a lasting bond between mummy and baby.



So what happens during the process of feeding?

There is a beautiful balance between 4 hormones and they play their role very creatively. The hormones are called; oestrogens, progesterone, prolactin and oxytocin.

Oestrogen and progesterone are hormones that are released by the placenta. Once the placenta is delivered, these hormones automatically decrease. The purpose of these hormones is to help prepare the breast to make milk. They also help to stop the breast from overproducing milk.

Then, comes in the hormone prolactin. This hormone helps to make and store the milk appropriately.

Lastly, the happy hormone called oxytocin plays its role once the baby suckles. There is this happy feeling of success, relief and contentment between the mummy and baby. It is also called the 'let down' period.

A mother's milk protects the baby from many common lung and abdominal diseases. It also contains living immune cells that protect the baby's immune system. Colostrums which are an important substance found only in the mother's milk, increase immunity and protect the baby's gut. Breastfeeding also protects the baby from allergies, asthma and eczema.

Benefits for the breastfed babies

Babies who are breastfed are sick less often and grow healthily. They tend to get less infections. They gain weight appropriately for their age. They have less learning and behaviour difficulties. It also enhances their development of eyesight. These are just some of the many benefits to the child.

Benefits for the mothers

There is a proper balance of hormones created. A special bond develops between the mother and the child. The mother loses pregnancy weight and size faster. Reduces the chances of infections and some cancers. There is an overall good health for the mother if she breastfeeds appropriately.

In conclusion, breastfeeding has been proven to be extremely important to the baby's health and body growth. It is so amazing that Allah Almighty's divine claims in the Noble Quran are always scientifically proven to be accurate and greatly beneficial to humanity. It is now very evident why breastfeeding is to be done for two complete years, as illustrated in the Holy Quran. Modern science has further highlighted the miraculous recommendation of the Quran regarding this matter which was revealed more than one thousand four hundred years ago. ■

Teething Myths

By: Aliya Gothey

Myth #1: Teething causes diarrhea

Teething is a milestone in every child's life, the appearance of their first teeth elicits a similar exhilaration to when they first start walking.

Normally the eruption of the milk teeth begins simultaneously with other changes in the infant's immune system that is, around six months of age. Rapid growth and development is also ongoing during this time. This period is also when coincidentally, infants lose most of their maternally derived antibodies and the protection they confer.

Additionally, they also become very curious at this age, beginning to explore by putting things into their mouth. This can result in infections, which can cause diarrhea.

Remember: teething does not cause diarrhea, If your child develops diarrhea, make sure you see a doctor!

Myth #2: Teething causes fever

As clarified in the previous myth, the teething period is heralded by changes in the child's immune system and the loss of maternally derived antibodies. This predisposes the infant to a variety of infections, which can cause fever. However, teething on its own does not cause significant fevers.

Babies may also have episodes of elevated body temperature during this period due to immunizations, being overdressed or due to crying. Teething may raise the body temperature ever so slightly however, high temperatures over 38.5 degrees Celsius are not due to teething.

Myth #3: Teething must be treated

Teething is a normal phenomenon that occurs for most children around the age of 6 months, but this time may vary for each child. It is a process in which the teeth – which are a part of your own body, are emerging into the oral cavity. There is no reason for it to be treated as a disease. Though it may be accompanied with excessive drooling and irritability, it is all a part of the normal process and requires no intervention.

Attempting to treat the irritability with an over-the-counter teething gel can be hazardous to your child's health. Teething gels should not be used in children under the age of 2 years. (why would you use them after the age of 2 when they already have teeth?)

Myth #4: Teething is always painful

You would be surprised to know that not all children experience painful episodes of teething. For many children it is actually a pain-free experience and often the new teeth in the baby's mouth take us by surprise.

The danger that is posed by prevalent teething myths

is that, signs and symptoms of some diseases and conditions may be ignored! This is because they might be viewed as being a part of the normal teething process and this could sometimes be detrimental to your child's health. As such, whenever you are in doubt, always consult your doctor! ■

Editor's Note:

Teething gels frequently contain mostly substances that only numb the oral cavity so as to reduce pain temporarily. It is certainly not a necessity and in most cases, babies can tolerate the teething process without them. Before using any product for your baby, always consult your doctor and make sure it is safe to use!



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Dental Trauma

By: Mariam Habib

Accidents happen all the time! And sometimes, they can happen to our faces! Here's what you should be aware of concerning traumatic dental injuries.

Research has shown that children are more likely to experience these traumatic dental injuries compared to adults. Most of the time, it's their upper front teeth that are affected. Children below the age of 4 years old are more at risk due to the fact that they are still learning to walk and run. Among adults, the causes include falling, motor traffic accidents, violence and sports.

In the event that an injury to the teeth has occurred, one of the following may happen:

- » There might be a fracture on the crown or root of the tooth
- » Abnormal loosening of the tooth without displacement
- » Partial displacement of the tooth outwards/ inwards or in any other direction
- » The tooth could completely come out of the socket
- » Cuts/bruises on the soft tissues.

If symptoms such as fainting, difficulty in breathing, bleeding or any neurological manifestations appear – please see a doctor! You can only go to a dentist if the symptoms mentioned above are not there!

In the case of children – who still have baby teeth – tooth extraction is considered when a tooth is severely decayed. If it can be salvaged, then it is maintained.

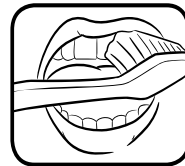
A fractured tooth is usually treated after taking an X ray of the tooth.

If a tooth is loose or has moved from its position (displaced), then they need to be repositioned and fixed. This means that you'll only be able to eat soft foods for some time!

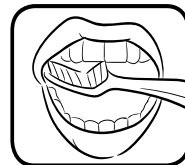
If the tooth has completely come out of the socket the most preferred treatment is to put it back into its original position. Although it is not possible to guarantee long term retention of the tooth, it can still stay for several years. Time is of the essence in this situation. Make sure to pick up the tooth by the crown and don't touch the root. Push the tooth back in place as soon as possible and then see a dentist. If this is not possible place the tooth inside the child's mouth between the teeth and the cheek, or inside a glass of milk and seek dental care immediately.

Dental injuries are difficult to prevent due to them usually occurring suddenly and as accidents. Correctly fabricated mouth guards can help with prevention in contact sports such as hockey. Most importantly immediately visiting a dentist can help improve the chances of a better prognosis. ■

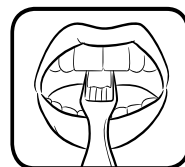
HOW TO BRUSH YOUR TEETH



» Place the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gums.



» Move the brush back and forth gently in short strokes.



» Brush the outer surfaces, the inside surfaces and the chewing surfaces of all teeth.



» To clean the inside surface of the front teeth, tilt the brush vertically and make several up-and-down strokes.

» Brush your tongue to remove bacteria and keep your breath fresh.

(Adapted from American Dental Association)

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Stem Cell Therapy

By: Mohamed Zahir Alimohamed

The human body consists of billions of cells that come together and function as a unit. Each part of the body comprises of specific type of cells that are clustered in numbers to form tissues that subsequently become an organ e.g. heart muscle cells, kidney cells, skin cells etc. Each cell however has its own life cycle, and at some point will be destroyed in a natural process called apoptosis/cell death. The depleted cells are then naturally replenished by the body and this cycle is important and integral to how organisms function and survive. Stem cells are basically the mother cells that can differentiate to form any type of cell and produce quantities required by the body.

Stem cells primarily are of two main types, embryonic and adult cells. In an embryo the embryonic cells multiply to differentiate into specific cell types needed for different tissues in different organs, while the adult cells are mainly used for tissue repair and regeneration.

This understanding has allowed scientists to explore the growth and repair pattern of cells in normal and diseased conditions. Stem cell therapy is therefore the use of stem cells to treat or prevent a disease. This is done by isolating the mother cells, setting conditions for them to reproduce and differentiate to specific cell types and subsequently applying these matured cells on patients with diseases, injury or having damaged tissues as part of their therapy and treatment. It is the upgraded form of organ transplantation that uses cells instead of organs which are limited in supply.

In our body there are three main accessible sources of stem cells. These include 1. Bone marrow, 2. Adipose tissue (fat tissue) and 3. Blood (including blood from the umbilical cord obtained just after birth). Medically, stem cell therapy has been in use for decades. Hematopoietic stem cell therapy is the most widely used form of treatment in patients with leukemia and lymphoma in which a bone marrow transplant is performed – a small bit of bone marrow from one person is removed and transferred to another person.

We can therefore repair any kind of tissue damage, like replacing neurons, skin grafts, and treated a damaged cornea. Science continues to explore and provide promising evidence on the use of stem cells for the treatment of various diseases that are currently not part of clinical therapy.

On the down side, a patient's immune system could reject the stem cells. Another problem is that not all cells grow as we want them to, and this could cause a tumor.

We should note that embryonic stem cells are derived from the embryo - a group of cells formed after



fertilization of the woman's egg with the male sperm. The use of embryonic stem cells has grabbed the attention from many pro-life politicians and religious leaders raising ethical concerns and issues on its use and the rights of a fetus. As a result, strict rules and guidelines have been made surrounding the use of embryo as source of cells. Human cloning is another potential of such technology. This has however never been attempted and laws governing stem cell therapy have strictly prohibited its use.

Use of stem cell according to Islam - In the year 2002, Supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei supported the human ESC research, issuing a fatwa on stem cells to be allowed for therapeutic uses. Ethical guidelines issued by the Iranian Ministry of Health and Education specify embryos less than 14 days old left over from IVF treatment can be used for research which ultimately must be destroyed. The law however prohibits production of human-animal hybrid embryos and misuse of genetic screening for eugenic purposes. Ayatollah Mubaligh, "if we do not benefit from stem cell research, then we have a humanitarian problem."

Point of concern. Stem cells hold immense medical promises and have already been tested for a variety of growing diseases. Amidst all its applications and advantages, there is still a lot to learn about stem cells. Many stem cell clinics use media to promote and market their products to potential patients/consumers. It is however, very important to know a lot of the new products are not scientifically sound nor clinically validated/tested. There are very few clinically approved therapies and one must ensure the therapy given has come through the right process. Consequences of untested therapies are detrimental to patient health. Patients are therefore advised to stay vigilant for consumer fraud. ■

Menstrual Hygiene

By: Sayyeda Mohamed Versi

It's "that time of the month" when your uterus is shedding, your cravings are at its peak, your hormones and acne are all over the place, your belly feels puffy and every muscle in your body is screaming in pain with your mood swinging up and down. This is the case with pretty much every girl who has reached puberty!

Every girl who has crossed the age of 13 has that time of the month when she bleeds continuously for 5-7 days. This is also known as the menstrual cycle. It is a monthly series of events a woman's body goes through in preparation for the possibility of getting a pregnancy.

Unlike other articles, this one is not going to explain the details of the menstrual cycle in depth; rather it will focus on how to maintain hygiene during menstruation.

Menstrual blood flows out from the uterus, outwards to the external surface. On its way out, it usually carries along with it some of the germs found in the body. The blood together with these germs collect on the sanitary product (pads/ tampons) that is used. In addition, the sanitary product also collects sweat from the body which can cause rashes and itching. If the pads/ tampons are not changed frequently, the germs collected by them multiply rapidly and start causing various infections including vaginal infections, skin infections and even urinary tract infection.

To prevent these infections and other problems such as bad odor, you must ensure to maintain good hygiene when you're on your period.

Wash your private parts well whenever you use the bathroom to change. Make sure you wash/ wipe front going back and not the other way. This prevents transmission of bacteria from the Anus to the Vagina. In addition, avoid washing your vagina with scented/ anti bacterial soap as this can disrupt the normal "good" bacteria of your vagina. Similarly, avoid using scented pads too.

Every woman has her choice when it comes to sanitary products. Not every woman wears a sanitary pad/ tampon. There are ladies who use a 'khanga' or a piece of cloth. If you're one of them, you're not doing anything wrong. You just have to make sure to wash it well with soap and hot water and dry it under direct sunlight before reusing it.

For those women who choose to use a sanitary pad, make sure to change your pad at least every 4-6 hours even if it's not fully soaked. Take emergency pads whenever you go out (school/work). That way it's easy to change frequently without chances of leaking. It is also a lifesaver especially when you're nearing your expected period date and it starts suddenly.



Dispose the pad/ tampon in a sanitary bin after wrapping it well in a paper bag, newspaper or plastic bag.

Here's a tip when you leak: For the ladies wearing the black 'abaaya'/'chador', they can easily get away at work or school. For those not wearing something of a darker shade, after changing your sanitary pad, just run to the nearest store and get yourself a new pair of outfit. ■



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Visiting the Adolescent's Mind

By: Abbasaly M Abbas

Adolescence sometimes referred to as teenage is a period of life starting at about 13yrs of age to the early 20s. Many interpret it as a transition from childhood to adulthood. During this period, a lot of changes take place in the bodies of a teen, especially in terms of cognitive abilities. All these changes are driven by a time lock or rather chemical messengers we all have in our bodies, so it is very possible for some people to go through adolescence earlier than others.

We can all recognize an adolescent through the changes in their physical appearance. However, it is equally important to appreciate the changes in their minds and thought patterns as well to be able to understand them better.

According to the cognitive development theory of a very famous psychologist by the name of Jean Piaget, teenagers fall under the fourth and final stage of development called the "formal operations" stage before adulthood. At this stage, thinking becomes much more sophisticated and advanced. They can think about abstract and theoretical concepts and come up with creative solutions to problems. This also helps them to think about about hypothetical situations like the "ideal" world and what the world needs to be like.

Together with an increased thinking capacity, the teenager also starts to consider the thoughts and feelings of others. However, they fail to distinguish between what they think others are thinking of, and what they actually are. In addition, psychologists propose that the mind of the teenager is further distinguished by egocentrism, which arises in two ways:

1) **Personal fable:** Simply put – the "I am Unique" phenomenon. This occurs because teenagers have a

heightened sense of selfawareness and spend a lot of time thinking about their thoughts and feelings. This brings about a feeling that they are misunderstood- "you just don't understand me". This also explains why teens take huge risks despite knowing that it may be dangerous – they act based on their perception of things.

2) **Imaginary audience:** having an imaginary audience is a common feeling among the youth, where they are convinced that everyone is looking at them. This is why teenagers may express intense selfconsciousness - they are concerned what others will think about how they look and/or behave. This is expressed when you find teens changing their clothes multiple times to find the "perfect" attire for a gathering.

Imam Ali (as) has said; "The heart of a youth is like an uncultivated piece of land, it shall accept whatever is planted on it."

All these are necessary parts of the normal development process of adolescents and they help them decide important matters of their life such as what role do they want to play in society and what they want to be - in terms of occupation, beliefs, personality and beliefs. Adolescents who succeed in defining who they are and successfully find themselves a role develop a strong sense of identity and are often successful. This is also why they are an uncultivated piece of land – what is sown at this time will definitely be what ultimately grows and is reaped in life.

With this brief insight of what transpires in the mind of a youth we are better equipped on how to channel this energetic and crucial stage of life to make a positive impact on the society. ■



Student Lives



Journey of a Medical Student By Aamir M Kanji

Aspiring to be a medical doctor, has always been my childhood dream. At last, I can say that my dream is almost coming to a reality. Being a medical professional is something I never thought about twice. I'm guessing it was just my inner

voice telling me how good I would look in that white coat bearing the responsibility of saving many people's lives.

My university studies, began in 2014, at the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS). At first, I was really worried of even getting entry into the university. So, when I received my letter of acceptance, I held my head high and promised myself to become one hard working medical student.

Life at the university has been one to remember so far. Entering my final year, it feels as though I was in the white coat ceremony just yesterday for my orientation. From dissecting bones and drawing blood to assisting surgeries and deliveries, all these have made my life quite exciting and satisfying. It hasn't been all that easy. Adjusting to a new environment with new colleagues from all across the country has been a fun experience. Examinations just can't seem to let go of you, having to tackle one paper after another.

The advice I can give to my younger brothers and sisters today, is to 'NEVER GIVE UP'. Life isn't about taking shortcuts. It takes great determination and composure. In the medical field, it's very important to have a healthy piece of mind and no matter what the circumstances are, you will get through. I hope my short summary inspires you to take up a career in something you love truly.



The license to heal or kill is here - Who is ready to have it? By Ntoli Mwaipopo

I was aspiring to become an engineer, but I became in love with pharmacy few days after completing my O' Level studies. It was an inspiration from my uncle and father who told me a little bit about who is a pharmacist, what he can do and his wide scope of working areas. From there, I could see myself as a drug designer, working in clinical settings, industries and with the pharmaceutical law.

Orientation week passed, struggles started, 9 hours in a class, waking up at midnight and a bunch of assignments became our normal life. First semester wasn't so tough because of the energy the dean fed us. Second semester went on smoothly as we were familiar with the courses, mostly, a repetition of advanced secondary level curriculum.

I have gone through many ups and down, I've scored highest marks, unexpectedly, lowest and moderate marks. Killing the night (night owl) isn't new to me, tests being my "friends". My colleague and I, used to encourage one another that, "the joy of success is greater than the hardship of efforts." Yes, the path is truly troublesome and tiresome yet the greater vision I've been fed before is that, I'll better the healthcare system. My professor once said, "Pharmacists and doctors aren't given certificates of practice so easily, because by certifying them, we license them to heal or kill" we need them to be the smartest hard workers, competent, committed and passionate about their career, innovative and constructive, problem solvers, decision makers, teachers, communicators and leaders"

"Welcome to white coat career, Welcome to med school".



Life of a Dental Student By Maysam Manji

Dental School is a place in which you will grow as a person and as a professional. You will be challenged to study more than you thought possible and pick yourself up when you fall down.

The first 2 years consists of basic science courses which means a lot of memorization has to be done. First year is a difficult year because one has to adapt to the university life and it's nothing compared to the high school life. We are bombarded with a bunch of units every semester which makes it even more difficult because the transition from high school life to university life itself is tiresome and very demanding but then you also have to focus on the units being taught.

Personally, for me, second year has been the toughest because it consists of extremely difficult units, broken down into different modules which means a lot of exams. This was the year where I became anti-social because it was very demanding and hectic and there was no time for extracurricular activities. Third year is when clinical years start where we actually get to handle patients and get hands-on experience. I enjoyed this year the most because I could actually see the theory we studied in the first 2 years being applied and we moved to the School of Dentistry. It was exciting doing things that we know we will be doing once we have finished our years of study.

The main setback we are currently facing, is that Dentistry is always considered inferior to Medicine. People think all we deal with is teeth but honestly, there is a whole lot more to it than just that. It is really trying, to be viewed as less important time and time again because we put in the same amount of effort as Medical Doctors and sometimes even more but it never seems to be appreciated enough. Despite the misconceptions of Dentistry, I love every second of it and I know I have made the right decision.



Physiotherapy, Just A Massage?! By Heena Bhimji

Physiotherapy! The one thing that comes to everyone's mind with this word is MASSAGE. Yesss! That was my first struggle. I wanted to change the views about physical therapy in our community and expand their mindset. We need to understand the importance of physical therapy and obliterate the misconception that exists within.

Being a student of physiotherapy, I must say, the struggle was real. Be it creating awareness or living in a place completely unknown to you. From getting familiar to the people around you, to learning a completely new language you had never ever heard about. Been through it all...

All I can say is, a physiotherapist plays a role in every part of the medical field. Whether it is orthopedics, cardiopulmonary, pediatrics neurology, sports science or community based rehabilitation.

Yes! We treat impairments where possible, in our field, but more than that, we prevent patients from reaching the stage of activity limitation. We adapt them, so that they can be independent in accomplishing their functional activities.

But guess what?! That's not all! We actually make a difference in their social life too!

We try and make sure, even if the impairment is untreatable, our rehabilitation is such, that the person can participate in all of his personal, religious and community gatherings. We don't include them in the differently abled, but instead acclimatize them in the (as we would say) "Normal" surroundings!

Us physios, do not just treat patients; we add LIFE to their years! ■



Stress

By: Arzoo-e-Zainab Murtaza Khalfan



"I feel so overwhelmed, so exhausted! I am actually burned out!"

Isn't this what we keep saying in our daily lives?

Well in reality it's not actually the stress that kills us, but rather our reaction towards it.

How can we define stress?

Everyone understands stress differently. Someone could talk about and say, "Stress is like a pressure cooker that's about to explode!" My friend Fatema puts it as, "it's a muscle tension I get in my neck when I think of how I am going to pass my final exams and ask dad for giving money for the photography course."

Though this reflects their own experiences of stress, each of these definitions is an incomplete way of defining stress. In reality, stress combines elements of all their opinions.

Stress is state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. You could say that it's the body's response to external events that somehow upset one's internal balance or make a person feel worried. From a biological point of view, the effects of stress can be positive, neutral or negative. Stress has many forms and impacts people of all ages, social background, employment and geographies. It is impossible to predict the stress levels for an individual. Still children, teens, working parents and seniors are among the groups that confront most stress factors related to life transitions.

Symptoms of stress can be cognitive, emotional, physical or behavioral. Initial symptoms include anxiousness, nervousness, distraction, internal pressure and excessive worry. These symptoms can negatively impact one's outward appearance and make him or her anxious or nervous, distracted, self-absorbed or irritable. More tough emotional and physical

consequences of high stress levels include excessive fatigue, headaches, depression, nausea and vomiting, chest pain, dizziness, the feeling of hyperventilation, choking and others. Eating and sleep disorders may also occur, as well as isolation, procrastination, alcohol abuse and habits such as nail biting.

These symptoms usually last for short periods of time. However, one should seek medical help in case the symptoms become more severe or appear more frequently.

Stress has been linked to almost every medical problem we know: Heart attacks, strokes, hypertension, ulcers, depression and anxiety.

So what can we do about it?

To understand and cope with stress we must be able to differentiate stressors and stress.

"Stressors refer to the external factor" whereas "Stress refers to the response of an individual to the stressors".

It's not what we have to deal with but rather how we deal with it that dictates the severity of stress in our day to day lives.

How can we cope with our stress levels?

1. Being able to identify your stressors
2. Positive Mental Attitude
3. Coping strategies;
 - » Daily active exercise for 30 minutes
 - » Get enough sleep and relax
 - » Give a "ME" time for an hour everyday. This means doing anything that you enjoy doing out of your busy schedule.
 - » No cigarettes, alcohol, caffeine or harmful drug use.
 - » Drink plenty of water
 - » Stable life anchors; loving home, inspiring friends, and faith. ■

Energy Drinks

By: Syed Orujul Hassan

In the current world, energy drinks are more of a trend rather than a just a beverage consumed. But what is an energy drink? Energy drink is a type of drink which contains stimulating drugs usually caffeine, that provides mental and physical stimulation. This is why it's marketed as "energy" as opposed to the food energy.

Caffeine is a brain stimulant, meaning it stimulates the system in the body which performs all conscious as well as unconscious activities. It is currently one of the widely used stimulant in the world. Examples of beverages containing caffeine include coffee, tea, coca cola, red bull, etc.

Coffee, tea and other naturally caffeinated drinks are usually not considered energy drinks. This is because of the lower quantity of caffeine present. Other soft drinks such as Coca-Cola may contain caffeine, but are also not considered energy drinks. However, not all sources of caffeine are created equal. Coffee and tea, however, do provide some health benefits.

Tea and coffee are rich sources of antioxidants. They help with disease prevention, linking to a decreased risk of premature death, diabetes and some types of cancer. Conversely, people need to be cautious of the amount they consume.

Back to energy drinks, a common trend among youth, which is increasing at a constant rate. They are marketed for their perceived or actual benefits as a stimulant, for improving performance and increasing energy. Companies often strike sponsorship deals with extreme sport franchises, presumably to sell the message that energy drinks are "edgy, energetic and refreshing".

The ingredients include high amounts of sugar, B vitamins, carbonated water, taurine and many more constituents which vary based on the brand. There was a chatter about taurine, which was initially found in

bull's semen, hence named so from the word "Taurus" meaning ox or bull in Latin. However, taurine is also found in human tissues, as well, including the human intestine, breast milk, meat, and fish. But, it is not the source of the taurine in energy drinks. It is produced in laboratories and is suitable for vegans and anyone wishing to avoid animal products.

According to a study done by the World Health Organization (WHO), energy drinks could cause public health problems. The health effects are largely related to their high caffeine content. The consumption of energy drinks affects the nutrition and health, with a negative effect on the metabolism. The major side effects include faster heart rate, high blood pressure, nausea and vomiting, fits, sleeplessness and, in some cases, even death. It can also lead to diabetes – as high consumption of caffeine reduce your body's sensitivity to insulin. Insulin is responsible for controlling blood sugar levels in your body. Late miscarriages, low birthweight in newborns and death of a baby in pregnant women is also a concern.

Moreover, the consumption of energy drinks excessively leads consumers towards toxic addiction. This toxic addiction in the long run can turn into several health issues such as depression. It also has effect on the monthly income of consumers ultimately influencing their consumption patterns.

All in all, because many countries including Tanzania allow the sale of energy drinks to young people, identifying ways to minimize potential harm from energy drinks is critical. It is recommended that public education and awareness programs regarding the potential benefits and adverse effects be arranged. Future research should be conducted to better understand the risks and possible interventions for the consumption of energy drinks. ■



Career Profiles



Dr. Sajjad Fazel

What degrees have you obtained so far?

I began my journey in the health field by pursuing the Doctor of Pharmacy degree (PharmD). I then pursued my Masters in Public Health at Western University.

Where do you work?

Currently, I work at the Canadian Cancer Society. The Canadian Cancer Society is a charitable health organization in Canada that is committed to preventing cancers and improving the quality of life for those living with cancer.

What do you do there?

As a policy researcher, I analyse various government and organization policies, make recommendations and advocate them to stakeholders. Currently, I am advocating to various universities and colleges to adopt a 100% smoke-free policy on their campus.

How does this impact the society/why do you find your job important?

Smoking kills over 45,000 Canadians and costs the country approximately 16 Billion dollars due to loss of productivity and health costs. Majority of smokers start as youth which makes universities and colleges great places for implementing smoke-free policies. By prohibiting smoking in post-secondary campuses, we are ensuring an entire generation that has less cancers due to smoking.

What's the coolest thing you've done so far? And why?

The coolest thing I've done so far is creating 'Afya Yako' which is Tanzania's first online health promotion initiative. I founded this initiative to educate the public on the prevention of non-communicable diseases using social media. It's an innovative way of using technology to benefit the public in a cost-free and large scale. As a large success, Afya Yako has received great acclaim in various media outlets and I was awarded the CIHR Travel Award for presenting a poster on the same at the Public Health 2018 Conference in Montreal.

Any advice for the next generation?

My advice to young health professionals is to be open minded and try out different things. Be bold and courageous. If you have an idea, try it out. Do not be afraid to fail for it is with experience that you gain insight and wisdom. Volunteer for activities, network with others, attend conferences, throw yourself out there and above all, have a big ambition and make sure you work towards it every single day.

Tehreen Ismail

What degrees have you obtained so far?

BSc. Biomedical Science and MSc. Medical Microbiology

Where do you work?

Douglass Hanly Moir Pathology, Sydney Australia

What do you do there?

I'm a Medical Scientist in Microbiology. In a nutshell, I diagnose bacterial, parasitic and viral infections within the human and perform antibiotic weaknesses for the infections.

How does this impact the society/why do you find your job important?

Most of the time, a doctor's diagnosis depends on our work in the lab! We're the driving force behind minimizing antibiotic resistance and ensure the correct treatment is provided after testing the bug against the antibiotic store.

What's the coolest thing you've done so far/the coolest thing about your job? (Achievement/found something new/ongoing project) And why?

I was one of the first to identify a bacterium that causes urine infection; in New South Wales. This bacterium can lead to a complicated series of infections if left untreated. A research during my post graduate earned me an award as the best piece of research in West Midlands – England. This was "The effectiveness of Manuka Honey as an Antibiotic." It works against the most common bacteria we encounter during our life.

Any advice for the next generation?

The field of Microbiology is ever evolving and by far, one of the most interesting one. It not only helps you realise what a beautiful creation the human body is but also helps you appreciate the unbelievable world of microorganisms.



Mohamed Zahir Alimohamed

What degrees have you obtained so far?

I completed my Bachelors of Science in Biotechnology at Manipal Life Sciences Center, Manipal University, India. I then pursued a Masters in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands.

I am currently pursuing my PhD in the field of medical genetics at the University Medical Center Groningen, The Netherlands.

Where do you work?

I work for the Innovation and Development section at the Genetics Department of UMCG (University medical center Groningen), The Netherlands.

What do you do there?

My research is mainly focused on using next generation sequencing (NGS) to diagnose (genetic) diseases in the clinic and its implementation strategies. It mainly involves improving genetic diagnostic tools and methods on various types of cancers and genetic disorders. I currently work on lung cancer, leukemia, colon cancer, skin cancer and certain heart conditions. In addition to my research duties, I am involved in student project supervisions and teaching activities in the field of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics.

How does this impact the society/why do you find your job important?

The medical field is currently experiencing a paradigm shift with genetic testing and pharmacogenomics as the new tools to enable medical scientists to accurately diagnose diseases as well as prescribe and produce specific drugs for therapy. With increased importance to the code of life, our DNA, and the importance of population genetics, the job of a medical geneticist is growing exponentially and has great benefits to the society. Especially with making informed decisions and patient safety.

What's the coolest thing you've done so far/the coolest thing about your job? (achievement/found something new/ongoing project) And why?

I am currently representing Tanzania at the African Society of Human Genetics. I hope to be able to facilitate technology transfer from my institute in The Netherlands to Tanzania, as well as set up and establish human genetics as a course for medical students. The goal is to have genetic testing as a routine diagnostic application in Tanzania and that would be really cool.

Any advice for the next generation?

Learn coding! Start early to get the real feel of what it means to write a program and how to translate computer languages to real science. Data science and coding coupled to biology is the next big thing.

Tabassum Manji

What degrees have you obtained so far?

Masters in Science in Critical care and Trauma Nursing and Bachelors in Nursing and Midwifery

Where do you work?

Regency Hospital

What do you do there?

I was previously the matron, and the head of ICU, currently the head of department of male ward

How does this impact the society/why do you find your job important?

We have very few well qualified nurses in Tanzania, and especially in our community, and that too with a specific skill set. This allows me to be able to provide my assistance at any situation I am placed at.

What's the coolest thing you've done so far/the coolest thing about your job? (Achievement/found something new/ongoing project) And why?

My research was based on steam inhalation using a Nelson's jug inhaler, which left patients and the medical staff surprised to how it worked so simply yet effectively. Oh and also! I had to carry out a CPR in the lift and managed to revive the person!

Any advice for the next generation?

Don't follow what others do just because they are doing it. Do what you know you are good either it be farming or a baker, because only you know what and where your strengths and skills are best suited for you. ■



Journey of a Lab Sample

By: Tehreen R Esmail

How often do we have to visit a Pathology (Laboratory) to get samples drawn or collected from us and have a sheet of result to collect later on?

As insignificant as a career in Biomedical Science may sound, there wouldn't be a hospital without a Pathology Department. As a Biomedical Scientist (BMS) who majored in Microbiology, I can proudly say, "We are essential in determining patient diagnosis, patient management of their disease and therapy, and screening for specific conditions. We may not be hands-on directly involved with patients but we still have a huge impact on their journey."

A BMS examines all types of samples, but the bulk of their work can be broken down into the following:

- » We analyse proteins and enzymes to see how your major organ systems are functioning (i.e., liver, heart, kidneys, pancreas etc.)
- » We look at your blood cells to assess if you have a bacterial or viral infection, leukaemia or anaemia.
- » We look for all four of the main microorganism areas - bacteria, fungus, parasites and viruses to determine which one of these may be causing the infection.
- » We are central in determining blood type and compatibility to ensure you are getting the correct transfusion products to minimize dangerous reactions.

One of the most frequent samples that I have to analyze daily, is urine. There is more to the results of a Urinalysis on a report than meets the eye. In a nutshell, microscopically, we look for casts, organisms, and dysmorphic red blood cells. We then put the sample in an analyzer to measure for blood, white blood cells, glucose, etc. A positive urine includes a high white blood cell count and growth of bacterial colonies on a medium depicting human conditions suited to the growth of a bacteria. This requires me to do further identification of the organism and set up antibiotics against the bacteria that in turn, will help the patient recover.

The clinician uses this report and further notes exchanged between the GP & myself to treat the infection.

All in all, the results are virtually endless since all types of human samples come through a lab. We analyze almost everything in the human body unseen. Any healthcare job is a little unpredictable. Just like a nurse never knows who's going to come through the doors of the emergency room, you truly never know what kind of specimen will come through your lab window. We have a variety of work to do every day. You can work in multiple



departments or choose to specialize in one. There are lots of opportunities and it never gets dull.

Medical Scientists hold one of the most in-demand positions in the healthcare industry. In Australia itself, Medical Scientist jobs are projected to grow 13 percent through 2026, according to the Bureau of Labour Statistics. This is nearly double the national average of 7 percent for all occupations. There is a large amount of retirements occurring in our field and very few Scientists to replace them. Because we work behind the scenes in the hospital, a lot of people don't know that our field exists or the extent of what we truly do. ■

ABBAS LALJI ADVERT

Five Lives

Five Men, Five Deaths, Five Million lives affected...

This article is only intended to raise health awareness; highlighting incidences and the current situation in most of our jamaats today. No particular individual, groups or names have been made as a reference.

Let's think about 5 close-knit friends, that often go to the mosque; be it for social events, sports, conferences, gatherings, majalis, etc.



1. Junaid- A regular at many kinds of sports, and quite active in the community. He tries his best to maintain a healthy lifestyle, but may chew tobacco occasionally.



2. Hashim- Not very regular at sports, but active in a lot of other activities in the community. A regular smoker.



3. Luwahim- An obese individual with an active lifestyle in the community and always a cheerful and helpful individual with no care in regards to his diet, and lives a carefree lifestyle.



4. Wahad- A silent individual, not very active in the community, however a regular lifestyle, not known to have any bad habits, always silent and withdrawn; usually bearing a very sullen expression on his face.



5. Alyam- The caretaker of the community, a diabetic, the person that is always the last one to leave, in contact with all kinds of people and the most hard working, but stressed out individual. A heavy smoker, chewing pariki on a daily basis.

After a very happy and joyous meal, i.e. a walima, the 5 meet up at the compound, for a chit-chat commonly referred to as "baraza". Both Alyam and Hashim light up a cigarette whilst Luwahim and Junaid open up packs of pariki to ensure the continuity and fun of the baraza.

Wahad sits for a few minutes and then bids farewell to his friends and heads back to an empty home.

Let us discuss the potential risks and fatal outcomes:

1. All the 5 of them are exposed to smoke, both active and passive smokers. Despite the fact that if one of them falls sick with lung, oral or throat cancer, the rest will still continue to smoke without respite, though feeling sad for their member.

2. Wahad commits suicide once he gets back home, this is because depression has always been a taboo topic to speak about in our communities, and the complete disregard for such individuals.

3. Obesity, quite rampant in the community, with very little emphasis on sports and a not so positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle. 75% of people from our community die from heart attack, strokes, which can be easily preventable by leading a healthy lifestyle.

4. Junaid though regular with a very healthy lifestyle, but suffers from throat cancer, that affects his tongue, bones and gums due to his regular chewing. He can no longer recite nauhas, mushairas and he now has to undergo a very expensive medical procedure, the expenses of which could have assisted with someone's education, food for a month etc. Yet Junaid does not survive the ordeal and dies since it spread to his lungs (exposure to passive smoke) although his friends claimed they will blow the smoke away from his direction.

5. A very unhealthy meal combination, that too, an hour prior to their bedtime. Plus, a regular exposure to smoke, both active and passive. They are all found to have moderate to high levels of cholesterol, (for which they claim to have been "dieting" recently). In the end, their inevitable death leaves behind five families, with their five new generations and their lives, completely different without their role models.

Mental health issues are a stigma; people consider depression and anxiety are issues that can be solved by just being happy. Imagine having malaria, and someone tells you by smiling you can get treated. Suicidal tendencies in our community is on the rise.

People are losing their lives, we need to have active awareness programs, reach out to people that may have mental health issues, avoid smoking around anyone (going outside the compound does not count!), reading health education resources which are plenty from health professionals,

We have a whole new generation that needs nurturing and caring. Are we going to make them suffer as well? Let's prevent innocent deaths by being more responsible, it begins with you! ■



Obesity - From L to XXXL

By: Aamir M Kanji

One of the most troubling and prevalent disorder in the world today is Obesity. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), obesity is defined as excessive accumulation of body fat, which can cause significant negative impact to one's health. Body Mass Index (BMI) is one of the most accepted and widely used method of knowing whether you are obese.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (in kilograms)}}{\text{Height}^2 \text{ (in metres)}}$$

A healthy BMI is one which is between 18 and 25. You will be considered overweight and not obese if your BMI is between 25 and 30. Only when your BMI crosses beyond 30 are you considered Obese.

Being overweight or obese is a well-known risk factor for developing a wide range of illnesses and diseases. Some of these include diabetes, high blood pressure and even some types of cancers. At least 2.8 million people die each year as a result of being overweight or obese. Many of them due to the complications that come with being obese.

Now, the question arises, what causes obesity? Sometimes, it has all to do with your genetics. However, this contributes very little to one's weight gain. Our lifestyle is one of the key components to knowing whether you will become obese. Overeating can cause weight gain and if not taken care of can result in obesity. If your daily diet consists of food which contains a large amount of fats and sugars then you are at high risk. Carbohydrates if taken more than what's required can also cause obesity in the long run. Having a bottle of soda, energy drink as well as processed fruit juice can cause weight gain. This is because they have enormous amounts of sugar in them. Reducing the amount of sugar in your morning tea or coffee, drinking more water and eating whole fruits instead of fruit juices

can significantly reduce your daily sugar intake. Furthermore, junk foods can also cause weight gain and obesity. Try to eat processed food as little as possible and have more natural foodstuff.

Another way to keep yourself from becoming obese is by performing regular exercises. It is recommended that you allocate at least 150 minutes of your time weekly to doing moderate intensity exercises. This means 30 minutes per day for 5 days a week. These exercises include walking, jogging or even playing your favorite sports such as football.

Also, sometimes diseases can even cause weight gain. Some of these include Cushing's disease and Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome for females. Treatment options are available so it's necessary for you to get a regular health checkup once in a while. In addition, usage of drugs such as steroids and antidepressants for a long time can cause weight gain and can even lead to obesity. You must keep constant follow up with your doctor to monitor your weight.

A simple tip at home is to keep a weighing scale and make constant notes of your weight weekly. Try spending less time on your technological devices such as laptops, smart phones and televisions and play more sports. A point to note is that obesity can also affect children and not just adults. Try to push your children to play sports as much as possible and make a meal plan for yourselves as well. Have a diet that is rich with fruits and vegetables.

Your health is in your hands. Obesity is not because it runs in the family, it's because no one runs in the family! A healthy body leads to a happy and well-functioning mind. Start making lifestyle changes today and be the ambassador for your health and the health of your family. ■



Mental Health

By: Fatema-Zehra Haider Rajpar

Over the course of our daily lives, every action that we do, every decision that we make and each and every individual we interact with, have an impact on us, in various different ways. There has been, however, a heightened concern regarding the social, psychological, and emotional aspects of our well-being, all of which, play a significant role in our mental health.

Biological factors such as genetics, life experiences; for example, trauma, abuse and family history are some of the contributory factors to the development of a 'mental illness'. Contrary to popular belief, that a mental illness is a condition whereby a person totally drifts away from the social norms of living, it is, in fact, a wide range of conditions that affect one's emotions, ways of thinking and behaviour. Highly common in many societies, this is an illness that often goes unnoticed by a mass majority.

The World Health Organization states, that around 20% of the world's children and adolescents' population have mental disorders or problems. Some of the most important psychological causes of mental illness amongst teenagers today, are due to emotional or physical abuse, neglect, feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem and high social and cultural expectations that are imposed upon them which become unable to handle.

Adolescents and youths usually go through a prime time of age where the centre of their life focus normally revolves around the financial, social, cultural, academic, psychological and emotional dimensions. It is then, only natural, to find a youth incapable to cope with all the amount of stress present in his/her life. Even more so, when the youth is struggling with these along-side other contributory factors towards mental illness.

Moreover, because of this social stigma that exists in most of our societies today, in regards to mental illness, youths find themselves, hesitant to take positive steps towards resolving their problems. Despite the availability of effective treatments and counselling, there's a belief that they are not treatable or that people with mental disorders are difficult, unintelligent or are not deemed fit to make decisions. Eventually, this stigma has the potential to lead to acts of abuse, feelings of rejection and abandonment, and isolation of these people from health care and support. Also, it is widely noticed that within health systems, people with mental illnesses are often criticised, ignored, and discriminated very much unlike other illnesses that people go through. Such practices, have made the youths feel reluctant to seek help, since they fear it is something that is not to be spoken of, and if expressed, it may affect their socio-economic life adversely.

The suppression of their need for support and health



care, leaves them feeling helpless and opting for alternative methods of stress release which are not always supportive or effective. Poor mental health can have severe defects on the wider health and development of adolescents, and is associated with several health and social outcomes such as higher intakes of alcohol, tobacco, illicit substance abuse, as well as, teenage pregnancy, school drop-outs and delinquent behaviour. There is a growing consensus that a healthy foundation during one's childhood and teenage years, contribute to the development of good mental health and can prevent many mental health problems.

In order to ensure, a healthy youth population, local communities should take initiatives in setting up mental health support groups that facilitate health care services to the young members of the community who are in dire need of assistance. In addition, it is of extreme importance to eradicate the stigma that binds the youths to their afflictions by raising awareness campaigns and educating people. Health workers need to have the competencies to relate to young people, detect mental health problems early, and provide treatments which include counselling, cognitive-behavioural therapy and, where appropriate, psychotropic medication.

Enhancing social skills, problem-solving techniques and self-confidence can help prevent mental health problems such as conduct disorders, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, as well as, other risk behaviours including those that relate to sexual behaviour, substance abuse, and violence. In addition, prevention of an illness at a young age might greatly reduce the chances of a child to suffer from a disorder later in life, thus being the most productive and fruitful measure from a public health perspective.

Disparities in mental health in any community affect society as a whole. Therefore, youths need to be assisted as they go through the adolescence stage in their lives struggling with many challenges. Without any guidance and support for our youths, will we truly be able to say that our societies are indeed, healthy? ■

Food and Fitness

By: Safia Teja

Food and fitness are two words that play a vital role in our day to day life and they have an impact on our mental and physical wellbeing, too. These two concepts go hand in hand to have a good and healthy lifestyle, as well as eating a well-balanced diet to help you fuel your body for your daily activities and maintaining fitness.

To eat a well-balanced diet and keeping fit is not as hard as it has been portrayed; starving yourself and not enjoying life is not the right way to have a healthy lifestyle. Having a combination of a good mental and physical wellbeing will lead you to have a successful control over your food; which will help you maintain healthy habits and keep up with your fitness.

The key is to have a balance and keeping it simple. Secret short-term diets and fat losing pills can be temporary solutions, which would not help you have a good quality life in the long run. Small variations like having a glass of water instead of a soda, eating fruits instead of chocolates or going for a walk in the park instead of binge watching a show can definitely make a difference to your mind and body.

We need to remember that fitness is not a destination, it's a journey where food is like your fuel that helps you through your journey. Hence choosing the right foods and not depriving ourselves from a little bit of unhealthy foods will give us the right amount of fuel we need for our journey.

Having a healthy heart, a stronger immune system, better cholesterol levels, improved memory functions and mood, decreased levels of stress, improved sleep patterns and prevention of chronic diseases like hypertension, diabetes and depression are some of the many advantages of having healthy habits. Hence it is important for us to consider incorporating a well-balanced diet and exercise in our day to day routine.

Adapting a transformation and implementing healthy habits can be hard, especially if someone is used to a set routine where fitness and eating wisely is not a priority. Being realistic, by keeping a simple and manageable plan that you can sustain to maintain or to lose weight in the long run would be an ideal way to start. We also need to keep in mind that it can take us multiple attempts before we can become successful in applying healthy habits permanently. That being the case, we should not give up when we become unsuccessful or binge eat wrong foods. If we have a fixed frame of mind and an aim to make fitness and a healthy lifestyle our main goal, then it is not hard at all to make the right choices.

Simple things like not skipping breakfast, eating a wide variety of fruit and vegetables, drinking lots of water, eating smaller portions, having high fibre foods, stocking up on healthy snacks, planning your meals and making exercise a part of your routine at least three times a week can help you have a good mental and physical well-being and a long healthy life. ■

ZUCCHINI BASED PIZZA

Having a carb free pizza is what a lot of people would want, so that they can enjoy it without guilt... here is a solution for that!!!

Instead of using flour as a base in the crust of a pizza, zucchini can be used to save you some carb intake.

Ingredients

- » Zucchini crust
- » 2 cups shredded zucchini, squeezed and dried (remove water)
- » 1 large egg
- » 1 tablespoon cornflour
- » ¼ cup grated mozzarella cheese
- » Salt to taste
- » Pizza sauce
- » 4 chopped tomatoes
- » 1 tablespoon oregano
- » 1 table spoon olive oil



Toppings

- » 1 cup grated mozzarella cheese
- » ¼ cup olives
- » ½ cup sweetcorn
- » ½ cup mushrooms

Ingredients

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees. In a large bowl, add the dried zucchini, eggs, corn-flour and salt and mix. Add the cheese to the mixture and mix until incorporated.
2. On a 12-inch pizza dish, place a baking sheet and then spread the zucchini crust, making sure it is not very thick or thinly spread. Bake it for 13 to 16 minutes or until it is golden brown and set.
3. For the pizza sauce, blend the chopped tomatoes, oregano and salt in blender, heat a pan with the olive oil and add the blended mixture. Let the mixture boil until it becomes a bit thick.
4. Spread the sauce on the zucchini crust and add the toppings, decrease the heat of the oven to 120 degrees and bake it for 10 to 13 minutes more until the cheese



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Anxiety

By: Sayyada Shabbir Sachedina



Does the level of your anxiety affect your normal daily life?

Mental health conditions are on the rise these days and thus the need of addressing them. A large number of individuals in our communities suffer from some of the common mental health conditions but do not air their problems out due to the fear of the stigma that exists in our societies with regards to them.

Have you ever tried asking yourself how many lives get affected because of this?

The end result of many of the mental health conditions is suicide. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that every 40 seconds, someone dies by suicide and it is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 29 years old. It is high time that we raise awareness on this matter so that help is provided to such individuals in due time. Speaking of mental health conditions, we have a long list that can be discussed. However, our focus with regards to this article will be mainly on anxiety related conditions.

Anxiety is a normal human response to objects, situations or events that are threatening. It can be helpful and adaptive. Anxiety becomes a disorder when it is out of proportion or when it significantly interferes with life. Anxiety disorders include disorders that share features of excessive fear and anxiety with accompanying behavioural instabilities. Many of the anxiety disorders develop in childhood and tend to persist if not treated. It tends to occur twice as more in females than males. Anxiety disorders is a spectrum of disorders but since we cannot discuss all of them here our focus will mainly be on Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). This is because it affects many people in our community. GAD is a chronic state of constant or free floating anxiety. It is described by persistent and excessive worry about a number of different things. Some of the typical worries include excessive worries about work, financial status or possibility of the individual becoming ill or having an accident. They find it very difficult to control their worries and expect the worst to happen even when there is no obvious reason for concern.

GAD is diagnosed when a person finds it difficult to control worry for at least six months and has three or more symptoms. The symptoms include feeling nervous, irritable or on edge, having a sense of impending danger or panic, increased heart rate, breathing heavily and fast, sweating, trembling, fatigue, difficulty in concentrating, trouble sleeping and experiencing abdominal problems like nausea and vomiting.

Are you experiencing similar symptoms or do you know someone suffering from this condition?

It's time now to finally break the shackles and seek for assistance. A number of treatments can help. Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (CBT) has been understood to help many people. This treatment helps people to control their thoughts and actions. As a medical student I personally noticed this therapy working wonders for the patients suffering from it. Relaxation techniques, meditation, yoga and exercises are other alternatives to the treatment plan. Medications are also an option if instructed by the physician.

In Islam we are also advised on how to deal with anxiety. Imam Ali (a.s) says, "Whoever has grief that he is unable to identify, let him wash his head." - *Bihar al Anwar Vol 76* ■

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Autoimmune Diseases

By: Mehdiyah Manji

An autoimmune disease is a condition whereby your immune system mistakenly identifies your own healthy cells as a danger and attacks them. As much as they sound rare, autoimmune diseases are quite a common occurrence. 5 to 7% of all people suffer from an autoimmune disease in their life.

Certain groups of people are more prone to get these diseases compared to others. For example, women are twice more likely to get them compared to men. There also appears to be some genetic cause as particular racial groups are affected more than other ones and some of them even run in families.

As of recent, the rate at which these diseases are emerging is on the rise. This makes researchers suspect environmental factors such as diet to also be involved. A "western" diet – rich in sugars and fats is suspected to be a trigger to these diseases.

Excess hygiene, whereby children are not exposed to enough numbers of foreign germs to build a good recognition of what is dangerous to the body is also thought to contribute. This leads the immune system to over-react to certain harmless substances.

However, the base line remains that there is no one particular cause known for these diseases.

There are more than 80 different autoimmune diseases but we will discuss a few common ones:

1. *Rheumatoid Arthritis* – This disease affects the joints mainly but can also affect your eyes, skin or even heart. It causes severe joint pain, for which patients can be kept on long-term painkillers and anti-inflammatory drugs to halt the joint degeneration.



2. *Multiple Sclerosis (MS)* – MS occurs when your immune system eats away the protective covering of the nerves in the Brain and Spinal Cord. Symptoms vary depending on what part of the Brain and Spine have been affected. As of now, there is no known cure. However, the disease can be controlled with long-term medications & rehabilitation.

3. *Crohn's Disease* – causes inflammation of your digestive tract, which can lead to poor absorption of nutrients and presents as abdominal pain, severe diarrhea, fatigue, weight loss and malnutrition.

4. *Lupus* – Also called Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, where the immune system affects multiple tissues and organs. The disease can affect many different body systems — including your joints, skin, kidneys, blood cells, brain, heart and lungs. No two people with Lupus will present the same way, making it difficult to catch it as well.

5. *Type I Diabetes* – This is when the immune system mounts an attack on the pancreas, which is the insulin-secreting organ in the body. This disease commonly shows up in children and teenagers when the levels of insulin hormone secreted by the body start declining. It can be successfully controlled by injecting Insulin daily.

Autoimmune diseases generally have no known cure. The goal of managing these diseases thus becomes controlling the symptoms produced by the disease and delaying the next attack. This can be achieved by the use of various drugs including steroids & immune modifying drugs and rehabilitative services such as physiotherapy. ■

Breast Cancer

By: Ali Khatau

For the past few months, Janeth, a 62-year old grandmother of 6 felt a small lump on her right breast. However, she never had any pain at or around the area and so, she never really paid much attention to it. Around a month ago, she came across a TV show where they were discussing about breast cancer. She discovered a breast lump might possibly be indicating breast cancer and researched on the signs and symptoms of the disease. She eventually decided to consult a doctor. She went to a local hospital where she was advised to do a mammogram test which confirmed presence of breast cancer. Fortunately, the cancer was in its early stages and the lump was surgically removed. Breast cancer is a type of cancer that develops in the cells of the breasts. It rarely occurs in young women and mostly affects older women.

Is it common and what are the signs and symptoms?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide. It affects over 1.5 million women each year, and also causes the greatest number of cancer-related deaths among women.

Majority of breast cancer cases are diagnosed when the woman notices a lump on or around the breast. Some of the most common features include pain around the breast, rashes on the breast skin, redness and discharge from the nipple.

Am I at risk?

The main risk factors include female sex and advanced age. Other significant risk factors include genetics or positive family history where the mother, grandmother or other direct family member has had breast cancer. Obesity, lack of exercise, alcohol consumption and cigarette smoking are also significant contributors to developing breast cancer.

Is it treatable?

A lot of misconceptions exist where people believe that cancer is incurable and a person who is diagnosed with cancer will surely lose his or her life soon. This is very untrue. Most types of cancers, if diagnosed early, are completely curable and leave no long term effects. However, if undetected during its initial stages and allowed to grow to advanced stages, they have very poor chances to be cured.

What are my treatment options?

As in the story above, the main treatment for breast cancer is surgically removing the lump- a procedure known as "lumpectomy". Another common procedure includes mastectomy where the entire breast containing the cancerous tissue is surgically removed. Radiation therapy & chemotherapy may also be used after surgery.



Please do not take any treatment plans without first consulting your doctor.

How can I prevent developing cancer?

Lead a healthy lifestyle with regular exercising. Also, maintain a healthy balanced diet & avoid long term stress. Say no to alcohol and cigarette smoking. However, if your family has a history of breast cancer you have a higher chance than others in developing it.

It is highly recommended to have regular breast cancer screenings for women from 45 years of age and above. You can begin with a self-breast exam and if you notice something suspicious visit your doctor early. ■



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Breast Cancer Screening

By: Sarah Somji

In order, to support the public health initiative, of early detection for the prevention of Breast cancer, the MHI members in collaboration with the team of Ebrahim Haji Charitable Health Center, have been carrying out yearly Breast Cancer Screenings over the past two years (2016 and 2017).

The camp is usually open for women of over 15 years of age, from all communities. The aim of the screening is to promote awareness about Breast Cancer and the fact that early detection can greatly improve the chances of a full recovery. There are various features to ensure that the participants are provided with a good service and health information including:

- » Female examiners
- » Free consultation
- » Health education on how to conduct Self Breast Examinations (SBE).
- » Subsidized Breast Ultrasonography for patients with positive findings on clinical examination.

Based on the response received from the participants, in terms of numbers and the positive feedback gained, the camp has deemed to have been successful overall. MHI would like to thank all the volunteers for their time and professional conduct and appreciates the support provided by the Ebrahim Haji Charitable Health Center and the Central Medical Board.

The Screening saw a total of 142 patients, out of which 61 (52%) had a normal diagnosis who were recommended and taught how to carry out a Self-Breast Examination. All women are recommended to carry out a Self-Breast Exam at least monthly in order to detect any abnormalities early. The rest of the 48% were recommended a further test after the clinical breast examination.

Being recommended for a further test does not automatically mean that there is an abnormality; rather that there may be a suspicion that could be further clarified using either a mammogram or an ultrasound test. Usually, an annual mammogram test is also generally recommended for women older than 40 years.

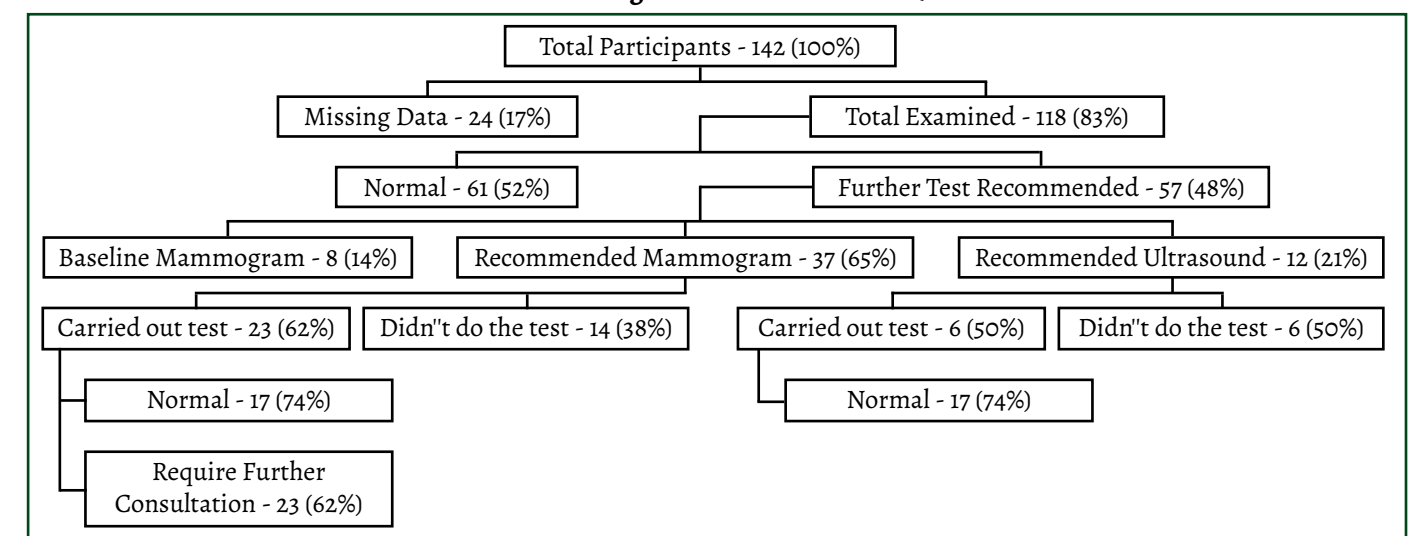
Of the 57 (48%) of patients that were recommended further testing, 12 (21%) were recommended an ultrasound, 37 (65%) were recommended a mammogram and 8 (14%) recommended a baseline mammogram (the annual mammogram testing). Of the ones recommended the test, 20 did not do the test and therefore no record of their results were obtained.

Of the ones who carried out the test, 6 (26%) required further consultations and were recommended to an oncologist. Thus, the importance of the annual breast screening is noted in detecting early abnormalities and preventing progressed breast cancers.

As per the 2016 Breast-cancer screening forms, it was noted that 49% of the women knew about conducting a self-breast examination (SBE), however only 24% of them actually carried out SBE (Table 1). This is not a good indication as SBE is an important tool of detecting breast cancers early. It is important to understand that the best way of preventing late-stage breast cancer is via SBE. The re-enforcement and teaching of SBE at this screening camps though increases the knowledge and importance of SBE however, it is the responsibility of each and every woman to care for her health and understand that "prevention is better than cure".

All women are urged to take advantage of these screenings! It is hoped that patients do not only value the yearly screening, but also carry out SBE. ■

Statistics from the screening done in November 2017 in Dar es Salaam



Cervical Cancer

By: Dr. Fatema M Versi

What is cervical cancer?

Cervical cancer refers to the cancer of the cervix, which is the bottom part, or neck of the uterus. This happens when normal cells in the cervix change into abnormal cells, and start to grow out of control which then spread to other parts of the body and invade them.

Cervical Cancer is a relatively slow growing cancer. This means that the change of cells from normal to abnormal takes some time, and this gives us a window of opportunity to catch it early. During this period, we can prevent the cells from developing into cancer, or if the process has already started, we can detect it early and start the appropriate treatment for it.

To be able to prevent cervical cancer, it is essential to know the risk factors that put you in harms way and increase your chances of getting it. These risk factors include:

1. Infection with the human papilloma virus (HPV)

» Around 100 different types of the HPV are known to exist in the world. Not all of these types cause cancer. There are a few however, that carry a high risk of causing cervical cancer when a person is infected by them. These include type 16 and type 18.

» HPV is usually spread by sexual contact and may also be spread from mother to child during delivery.

2. Having multiple sexual partners

» This increases your chances of contracting HPV and thus puts you at risk for cervical cancer.

3. Smoking

» This increases the risk 4 fold as does low immunity

To be able to catch the disease early, it is advisable to undergo regular screening for cervical cancer. Women above the age of 21 year up to 65 years are recommended to undergo the screening.



There are multiple methods for cervical cancer screening that are commonly used. These include:

1. Visual inspection of the Cervix.

» This is one of the most common methods used in low resource settings. In this method, acetic acid or lugol's iodine are applied onto the cervix and it is then observed for any changes that may indicate a pre-cancerous or cancerous lesions.

2. Papanicolaou Test – commonly called “pap” test or “pap” smear

» This is whereby cells from the cervix are scraped and taken to the laboratory where they are processed and then observed under a microscope for any changes that might indicate an ongoing cancerous process.

» It is recommended that women aged 21-29 should have a pap test every 3 years. Women aged 30 and older can have a pap test every 3 years or a pap test and HPV test every 5 years.

3. The Human papilloma virus or ‘HPV’ test

» This is whereby infection with HPV strains is checked to determine the likelihood of developing cancer. It is usually used in conjunction with the other tests.

Screening can help find cervical cancer and pre-cancerous states in the early stages when it can be treated and reduce the number of deaths occurring due to cervical cancer.

In addition to screening, certain methods can assist to prevent the disease from occurring. These include:

1. Avoidance of the above mentioned risk factors

2. Vaccination against HPV- This is recommended for girls/women aged 9-26 and boys/men aged 9-21. ■

Happiness

By: Zishaan Karim

Happiness--what is it, if I may ask
An emotion at completion of a task?
Excitement of doing an activity enjoyable?
Or a serving scrumptious and palatable?

Happiness depends on a person himself more than others
It is not achieved through efforts of another
These are the words of Aristotle, the wise
To feel happiness, a plan let's devise

Happiness is not a goal for the future
It is a sentiment encompassing man's stature
Expressed while journeying through life
Experienced even in the toughest of strife

It is not decided by posts on social media; it's not virtual
It's an inner feeling, an emotion and sentiment so very real
It is indeed a mental state, a perception by the mind
Searching in the exterior world, one shall never find

For happiness look within yourself deep
Allow the emotion to, within you, seep
Come to terms with who you are, and not what you have
Don't count your success by what you save

Focus on being alive every moment, every tick of the clock
All negative thoughts, do your best to block
Take in energy that is clean and positive
Happiness is less in take, more in give

Emit vibes positive; be energized and radiant
Keep moving in life, be not stagnant
Feel happy within, to spread happiness around
On encounters with others, make an impact sound

Be happy from within, do not pretend
Then to others you will be able to extend
They in turn, will positivity reflect
It is a cycle; make a choice, do select. ■



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Analgesic Abuse

By: Dr. FatemaZahra Karim

Fever and pain, the two most common complaints during illness, are both part of the body's natural response. A fever usually signals infection, but it is more than just a signal; it actually aids the immune system to fight off that infection. Similarly, pain is your body's way of telling you to slow down, take a break, and maybe stop what you're doing.

Many of us consider pain and fever hindrances to our daily activities, and would rather do away with them immediately. That means overuse of painkiller and fever-breakers such as paracetamol (Panadol), aspirin, diclofenac is, unfortunately, common and not without ill-effects. Paracetamol, for example, can cause liver damage when overused. Aspirin, ibuprofen, diclofenac and others in the same category may cause peptic ulcers and kidney damage.

So what can you do?

» Avoid these medicines when you can. Rest when you have a fever or pain. Allow your body to heal itself.

» If prescribed, use only as prescribed and not more than that.

» Read the information leaflet included to know the maximum amount you can take.

» If necessary for a recurrent high fever, or one that may be dangerous for a child (>38.5°C or in a child prone to febrile convulsions), one way to prevent an overdose is to alternate 2 different medicines such as paracetamol and ibuprofen both given 8 hourly but offset by 4 hours. E.g.

6am Paracetamol
10am Ibuprofen
2pm Paracetamol
6pm Ibuprofen, etc



The following are the maximum adult doses for common painkillers/fever-breakers. Let this help you as a guide:

Medicine	Maximum Daily Dose	Maximum Dose at a Time	Maximum Frequency
Paracetamol	8g/day	2 (500mg) tablets	6 hourly
Aspirin	3.9g/day	2 (300mg) tablets 4 (150mg) tablets	4 hourly
Ibuprofen	3.2g/day	2 (200mg) tablets	4 hourly
Diclofenac	150mg/day	1 (100mg) tablet at first followed by 1/2 (100mg) tablet OR 1 (50mg) tablet thereafter	Once 8 hourly

Be aware that maximum doses for children are weight and age specific, so be sure to ask your paediatrician about the limit for your child so as to not accidentally exceed it. Also remember that the above mentioned doses are maximum doses; your doctor may ask you to use a lower dose based on your condition. ■

A 5 Year Old to Blame

By: Punit Solanki

"Until yesterday, I never knew my 5 year old granddaughter was responsible for my poor blood sugar control" said one correspondent in a certain district in Tanzania. How is that possible; is a question I believe most would be curious to know. How does an innocent 5 year old baby affect my body's sugar? She was puzzled.

We dwell in a country where on a very fine day, the temperature hits 30 degrees centigrade and the inside could probably be over 30 if good air and ventilation system are not considered. Like any other material, medicines need to be protected from damage.

My friend explained, "My granddaughter is fond of chocolates; when her mum is away at work, the child often spends her time searching for them in the refrigerator, which are cleverly hidden inside." Basically, the insulin which is kept on the refrigerator door is affected by the temperature fluctuations when the baby is looking to find way to have one up against her mom. This was found after a careful assessment by her health care team.

Many medications, including insulin, lose their effectiveness when exposed to heat or freezing temperatures. If you have ever taken frozen tomatoes out of your fridge, you already know that domestic refrigerators are not exactly up to medical standards. Insulin must be stored between 2–8°C. Even exposure to a few degrees lower or higher outside the recommended range add up over a longer time and can gradually lower insulin effectiveness and lead to complications of poor diabetic control.

Don't worry, there is no need for investing in a new fridge now! With these tips you can make sure that your Insulin stays safe and effective:



1. Beware of cold and warm zones; according to majority of mapping studies, the center of a shelf is often ideal, the doors and butter compartments are the warmest especially the doors which are exposed to normal temperatures when opening the refrigerators on daily use, the lower shelves, walls or close to freezer compartments are the coldest and pose a risk of freezing. Don't use insulin once it has frozen, or even after it has thawed.

2. Use an airtight box; practical and very effective in protecting from fluctuations.

3. The other refrigerator; if you happen to have more than one, use the less frequented refrigerator for your medications.

4. If you have a small child plays around with the door as seen with our correspondent, take precautions like a door lock to limit her access to the refrigerator.

5. Always request for cold packs when purchasing or receiving the insulin vials at the retail outlet or hospital. Try and go straight home after receiving the insulin vials to avoid high temperatures.

6. If you experience frequent power cuts, try to use a generator/invertor, if that fails, reduce the opening of the refrigerator to avoid escape of the cold air inside.

7. Bonus Tips: invest in a small insulin carrier and/or a domestic temperature monitor for your refrigerators that gives alerts when your insulin is exposed to extreme temperatures.

We can only take the precautions as given by the medical experts in the health care team.

We hope that all stakeholders maintain the same storage management of medicinal products in our country for a healthier future ■



Osteoporosis

By: Aiman Gulamhussein



As we get older the bones in our body aren't able to renew themselves overtime and slowly start to become thinner and weaker, leading to a condition called Osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a bone disease that causes bones to become weak and fragile as the amount of minerals in the bones including calcium are reduced. This leads to the deterioration in the microscopic structure of the bones and modification of various bone proteins which results in fractures. These fractures can commonly occur in the spine, wrist and hips but can affect other bones such as the arm or pelvis. It is estimated that around 200 million people worldwide suffer from osteoporosis, at least 40% of women and 15-30% of men will suffer one or more fractures in their lifetime.

Osteoporosis can be classified into three categories; depending on the onset and cause of the disease:

» **Primary type 1:** Commonly occurs in post-menopausal women probably due to decline in the production of oestrogen hormone with age. It typically develops between the ages of 50 and 70

» **Primary type 2:** Also known as senile osteoporosis, occurs after the age of 75 in both males and females mainly due to old age but can also have multiple causes.

» **Secondary:** Occurs at any age and can affect both males and females. It occurs when a separate cause results in osteoporosis. This may be other diseases such as hyperthyroidism or the long term usage of certain medications such as steroids.

Osteoporosis progresses slowly over several years and can go undetected, as there is no pain associated with it. It is often discovered when a minor fall or sudden

impact causes one of the affected bones to fracture.

Osteoporosis usually develops in many people due to the following risk factors:

» **Insufficient peak bone mass;** which refers to the highest amount and strength of bone that our body contains at the end of the development of our skeleton. If this amount is low, the bones are easily eaten away when they develop osteoporosis.

» **Accelerated Bone breakdown** whereby when the bones are broken down at a quicker rate with advancing age and after menopause.

» **Inadequate formation of new bone.** The rate at which the body can form new bone declines with age.

Research has shown that hormones play a major role in affecting bone density therefore diseases associated with the hormonal glands can also lead to osteoporosis. Other causes of Osteoporosis include lifestyle such as heavy drinking/smoking, a sedentary lifestyle with minimal physical activities, malnutrition, family history and genetics.

The most common treatments associated with the prevention and management of this disease are life style changes. If regular exercise and a well balanced diet are incorporated into our life, it drastically decreases our chances of developing osteoporosis. In addition, other treatment methods include hormone replacement therapy. Here the decline in production of estrogen is tackled by using hormonal supplements. Other supplements that aid in preventing as well as reducing the risk of developing osteoporosis include calcium and vitamin D which help to fortify bone structure and increase its durability and strength. ■

Hearing Loss

By: Ali Fayaz Jaffer

“Hearing Loss and Deafness” – One common misconception about hearing loss is that, it means deafness i.e. not being able to hear at all. Like with our vision, there are many different types of hearing loss – from mild losses that cause difficulties in hearing speech in noisy environments to profound losses that engulf an individual in a world of silence. One's hearing can also be different for different pitches of sound; some people hear low pitched sounds better than high pitched ones, for example. Worldwide, 466 million people have a hearing loss of some extent, and the World Health Organization states that one in three people over the age of 65 have a hearing loss. The best way to know for sure is to get it tested regularly!

“Only elderly people get a hearing loss” – One billion young people are at risk of hearing loss. Although more regulations have been imposed on environmental, recreational, and work related noise, exposure to loud sounds is still a leading risk factor for hearing loss in younger people. Portable speakers like earphones, headphones and Bluetooth devices also cause hearing damage at an alarming rate, especially when little thought is given to the amount of time worn, or at what level of volume listened to. Loud concerts, heavy machinery and hobbies such as shooting have been seen to cause different levels of hearing loss if exposed without adequate noise protection.

“Hearing aids are big, bulky and old-fashioned” – The days of hearing aids looking like giant bananas are gone! These devices in today's age come in many different shapes, sizes, and colours. Based on your hearing loss, you could have anything from a tiny hearing aid that sits almost invisibly in the ear, to more fashionable skin-coloured devices that sit behind your ear and actually

connect to your phone, allowing you to control it and stream audio or phone calls directly to it. As modern technology improves, hearing aids are having more and more functions built into them – it has been predicted that in a few years, they will be able to measure and record your heartbeat and pulse too!

“Hearing aids are too noisy” – A common perception of hearing aids is that they are too noisy, whistle all the time, and barely help. Hearing aids can be compared to spectacles – for the best outcome, they have to be fit to your prescription. It is important that a qualified professional fits your hearing aid, as they can adjust numerous things and make sure you are comfortable and happy with the device. Improperly fit hearing aids can do more harm than good – try wearing someone else's spectacles and see how blurry they can make everything look.

As one cannot see a hearing loss (and in most cases cannot notice, it occurs gradually), it is fittingly called a ‘silent impairment’. It is important to look out for it – in ourselves, our families, and our friends – because of the problems it can cause, the first of these being difficulties in communication. This can lead to issues such as social isolation, speech and language difficulties, memory and attention problems, increased stress, and depression. Furthermore, it has also been linked to dementia i.e. a mental illness – associated with earlier onset of dementia when compared to people without a hearing loss.

“Say: It is He Who has created you (and made you grow), and made for you the faculties of hearing, seeing, feeling and understanding: little thanks it is you give.”
[Holy Qur'an; Surah al-Mulk 67:23] ■



At the End of the Journey

By: Dr. Hussein Karim Manji

I know where this phone call is going. I'm in the emergency room downstairs talking to a physician in the wards about an elderly patient who needs to be admitted to the hospital. The patient is new to me, but the story is familiar: He has several chronic conditions - heart failure, weak kidneys, anemia, mild dementia and pulmonary edema - all tentatively held in check by a fistful of medications. He has been falling more frequently, and his appetite has fallen off, too. Now a stroke threatens to topple this house of cards.

We talk briefly about what can be done. The stroke has driven the patient's blood pressure through the roof, aggravating his heart failure, which in turn is threatening his fragile kidneys. The stroke is bad enough that he will probably never walk again. In the elderly, patients with a web of medical conditions, the potential complications of any therapy are often large and the benefits small. It's a medical checkmate; all moves end in abdication.

If I'm lucky, the family will accept the news that, in a time when we can separate conjoined twins and reattach severed limbs, people still wear out and die of old age. If I'm lucky, the family will recognize that their loved one's life is nearing its end.

But I'm not always lucky. The family may ask me to use my doctor superpowers to push the patient's tired body further down the road, with little thought as to whether the additional suffering to get there will be worth it. Modern medical advances have made death seem more

like an option than an obligation. We want our loved ones to live as long as possible, but our culture has come to view death as a medical failure rather than life's natural conclusion.

Islam, despite having different schools of thought, is united on its view of death as a transition between two different worlds and lives; and the human being is considered sacred bound to return back to his Creator. Furthermore, this transition is portrayed by the Quran as a difficult experience for the wicked because they did not believe in an afterlife, the only life they knew is ending, and it was spent carelessly and unwisely. (47:27-28) Suicide is strictly forbidden according to the laws of Islam and there exist certain ritual requirements to be performed once death has been affirmed. Islam also believes that the body feels and perceives even post death and even just a mere touch may cause pain to the deceased soul, a concept often narrated by elders. The concept of a life not worthy of living is unacceptable and euthanasia is prohibited. Because of the belief that death is the connection between the two lives of a person, prolongation of life by supportive machines is unacceptable in the terminally ill when there is confirmation of death. A do-not-resuscitate (DNR) order is an acceptable directive for the terminally ill Muslim, but requires to be explained well.

Unrealistic expectations often begin with an overestimation of modern medicine's power to prolong life, a misconception fueled by the dramatic increase in the life span over the past century. Due to simple

public health measures such as improved sanitation and nutrition and better obstetrical education and safer deliveries and not necessarily MRI's, open heart surgeries and sophisticated medicines, by 1950, average life expectancy had catapulted to 68 years. But for all its technological sophistication and hefty price tag, modern medicine may be doing more to complicate the end of life than to prolong or improve it.

Another factor in our denial of death has more to do with changing demographics than advances in medical science. Our nation's mass exodus away from the land and an agricultural existence and toward a more urban lifestyle means that we've antiseptically left death and the natural world behind us. For most of us living with sidewalks and street lamps, death has become a rarely witnessed, foreign event. The most up-close death most urban-raised children have experienced is the occasional bodaboda accident or a neighborhood cat sentenced to death by a speeding car. The chicken we eat comes in plastic wrap, not at the end of a swinging cleaver. A dying cow is not the same as a person nearing death, but living off the land strengthens one's understanding that all living things eventually die.

Mass urbanization hasn't been the only thing to alienate us from the circle of life. Rising affluence has allowed us to isolate senescence. Before nursing homes, bewakhanas and in-home nurses, grandparents, their children and their grandchildren were often living under the same roof, where everyone's struggles were plain to see. Isolating our elderly keeps most of us from knowing what it's like to grow old. This physical and emotional distance becomes obvious as we make decisions that accompany life's end. Suffering is like a fire: Those who sit closest feel the most heat; a picture of a fire

gives off no warmth. That's why it's typically the son or daughter who has been physically closest to an elderly parent's pain is the most willing to let go. Sometimes an estranged family member is "flying in next week to get all this straightened out." This is usually the person who knows the least about the struggling parent's health; they'll have problems bringing her white horse as carry-on luggage. This person may think they are being driven by compassion, but a good deal of what got them on the plane was the guilt and regret of living far away and having not done any of the heavy lifting in caring for their parent.

With unrealistic expectations of our ability to prolong life, with death as an unfamiliar and unnatural event, and without a realistic, tactile sense of how much a worn-out elderly patient is suffering, it's easy for patients and families to keep insisting on more tests, more medications, more procedures. Doing something often feels better than doing nothing. Inaction feeds the sense of guilt-ridden ineptness family members already feel as they ask themselves, "Why can't I do more for this person I love so much?"

Opting to try all forms of medical treatment and procedures to assuage this guilt is also emotional life insurance: When their loved one does die, family members can tell themselves, "We did everything we could for Mum." In my experience, this is a stronger inclination than the equally valid (and perhaps more honest) admission that "we sure put Dad through the wringer those last few months."

At a certain stage of life, aggressive medical treatment can become sanctioned torture. When a case such as this comes along, nurses, physicians and therapists sometimes feel conflicted and immoral. We've committed ourselves to relieving suffering, not causing it. A retired nurse once wrote to me: "I am so glad I don't have to hurt old people anymore."

When families talk about letting their loved ones die "naturally," they often mean "in their sleep" — not from a treatable illness such as a stroke, cancer or an infection. Choosing to let a loved one pass away by not treating an illness feels too complicit; conversely, choosing treatment that will push a patient into further suffering somehow feels like taking care of him. While it's easy to empathize with these family members' wishes, what they don't appreciate is that very few elderly patients are lucky enough to die in their sleep. Almost everyone dies of something.

Members of my family brought their mother, who was battling end stage cancer, home to live with them for her final, beautiful and arduous years. There they loved her completely, even as the cancer took its dark toll. They weren't staring at a postcard of a fire; they had their eyebrows singed by the heat. When the metastasis finally got to her, they were willing to let her go. ■



Video Challenge

There is no health without mental health

Across the globe 1.1 billion people suffer from mental health problems. Most of these are silent and go undetected - every small effort to address them counts!

Our challenge to youths 18 years and above is to make a 1 minute video explaining what mental health means to you and how you can help a loved one if they were suffering from a mental health problem.

» Entries can be submitted via email to whitecoats.mhi@gmail.com as a video or Dropbox/Google Drive link.

» Entries will be judged based on the criteria of **relevance, originality, innovation and sustainability**.

» The winning entry/entries will win a fabulous prize which will be announced soon and will be exhibited along side other interesting entries on our Facebook page.

» Deadline for submission is **25th November 2018**.

» For further inquiries or clarification, write to us at whitecoats.mhi@gmail.com

#MHChallenge

#MentalHealthAwareness

#MentalHealthMatters

#EndTheStigma

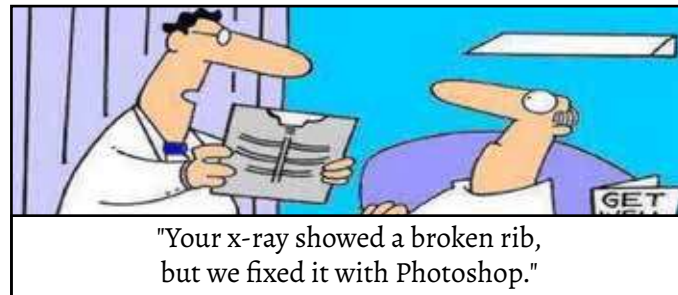


Medical Humor



A mother complained to her consultant about her son's strange eating habits. "All day long he lies in bed and eats yeast and sugar. What will happen to him?"

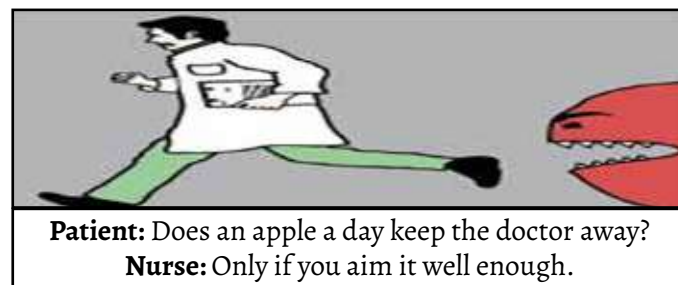
"Eventually," said the consultant, "he will rise and shine."



"Your x-ray showed a broken rib, but we fixed it with Photoshop."

Woman: My husband swallowed an aspirin by mistake, what shall I do?

Doctor: Give him a headache now, what else!



Patient: Does an apple a day keep the doctor away?
Nurse: Only if you aim it well enough.



"Where did the doctor even get that font?"



The reason why dentists have lots of money



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