DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY

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Yoga and Physical Fitness

Using Yoga to alleviate chronic pain: Insights into back pain, arthritis and insomnia (Hindustan Times: 20240626)

https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/explore-how-yoga-helps-manage-various-types-of-chronic-pain-healing-benefits-for-back-pain-arthritis-and-insomnia-101719139145165.htm

Yoga for chronic pain: Discover complementary therapy techniques for back pain, arthritis and insomnia

Chronic pain, which includes ailments like back pain, arthritis and headaches, can be incredibly challenging to live with. It affects millions of people worldwide and often leads to a diminished quality of life.

Using Yoga to alleviate chronic pain: Insights into back pain, arthritis and insomnia (Image by Freepik)

Using Yoga to alleviate chronic pain: Insights into back pain, arthritis and insomnia (Image by Freepik)

While traditional medical treatments play a crucial role in managing pain, experts insist there is another tool that can complement these treatments - Yoga.

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Understanding Chronic Pain:

In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Himalayan Siddhaa Akshar, Founder of Akshar Yoga Kendraa, shared, “Chronic pain isn't just a physical sensation; it can affect your emotional well-being and overall health. It's often caused by conditions like arthritis, herniated discs, or tension in the muscles. Regardless of the cause, the pain can be persistent and debilitating.”

How Yoga Helps:

Yoga is a holistic practice that involves physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation. Himalayan Siddhaa Akshar asserted that it may seem surprising but this ancient practice can have a profound impact on managing chronic pain. Here's how it works -

Improving Flexibility: Yoga postures, known as asanas, gently stretch and strengthen muscles. This can help alleviate tension and improve flexibility, reducing pain associated with conditions like arthritis or muscle spasms.

Enhancing Posture: Many chronic pain issues stem from poor posture. Yoga encourages proper alignment, which can prevent and relieve pain caused by incorrect body mechanics.

Stress Reduction: Stress is a common trigger for chronic pain flare-ups. Yoga incorporates relaxation techniques that calm the mind and reduce stress, potentially reducing the frequency and intensity of pain.

Increasing Body Awareness: Through Yoga, individuals become more attuned to their bodies. This heightened awareness can help them identify pain triggers and adopt healthier habits.

Yoga for Back Pain:

Himalayan Siddhaa Akshar explained that back pain is one of the most prevalent types of chronic pain that can result from various factors, such as muscle strain, herniated discs or poor posture but Yoga offers several asanas that target back pain -

Child's Pose (Balasana): This gentle stretch can provide relief for lower back pain by elongating the spine and relaxing tight muscles.

Cat-Cow Stretch: This dynamic movement helps improve spinal flexibility and can alleviate tension in the back.

Downward-Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana): This posture helps strengthen the back muscles and improve overall posture.

Yoga for Arthritis:

Given that arthritis is a chronic condition characterised by joint inflammation and pain, Himalayan Siddhaa Akshar opined that Yoga can be a valuable tool for managing arthritis pain via -

Gentle Joint Movements: Yoga encourages gentle movement of the joints, which can reduce stiffness and improve mobility.

Breathing Exercises: Pranayama, or yogic breathing techniques, can help manage pain by promoting relaxation and reducing stress.

Supported Poses: Props like cushions or blocks can be used to support the body in poses, making them more accessible and comfortable for those with arthritis.

Yoga for Insomnia:

Himalayan Siddhaa Akshar said, “Struggling with insomnia can be exhausting and frustrating. While there are many remedies out there, yoga offers a natural and effective solution. These simple techniques should be done in the morning to help calm your mind, relax your body, and promote better sleep.” He suggested -

Cold water bath: Taking a cold water bath can help with insomnia by lowering your body temperature, which signals to your brain that it's time to sleep. The drop in temperature can also promote relaxation and reduce stress, making it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep.

Healing walk: Lift your arms up keeping them at shoulder width distance and walk with your arms raised in this position and your hands can be up in the air for 1-3 minutes. Perform a minimum of three sets of these walks of minimum 1-3 minutes each.

Brahmari Pranayama involves breathing deeply, then making a buzzing sound like a bee. It calms the mind and reduces stress. Practice it by sitting comfortably and closing your eyes. Inhale deeply through your nose, then exhale while making a humming sound like a bee

Himalayan Siddhaa Akshar concluded, “Yoga is a simple yet powerful tool for managing chronic pain. Its gentle approach to physical activity, combined with stress reduction techniques, makes it accessible to people of all ages and fitness levels. However, it's essential to consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new exercise program, especially if you have a medical condition. Yoga, when practiced mindfully and consistently, can be a valuable complement to traditional pain management strategies, helping individuals live more comfortably with chronic pain.”

Brain tumours

How to detect brain tumours in children early: Watch out for these warning signs (Hindustan Times: 20240626)

https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/lifesaving-proactive-parenting-tips-ways-to-identify-brain-tumour-symptoms-in-children-without-delay-101719157627806.html

Critical signs of brain tumours in children that every parent should know

When a child is detected with a brain tumour, timely treatment is life-saving however, it is essential to spot the warning signs in children without any delay and initiate prompt intervention. Read on as we shed light on signs of brain tumours in children that shouldn't be missed and parents need to be proactive when it comes to their child's health.

How to detect brain tumours in children early: Watch out for these warning signs (Photo by Pain Resource)

How to detect brain tumours in children early: Watch out for these warning signs (Photo by Pain Resource)

In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Shiji Chalipat, Consultant Pediatric Neurologist at Ankura Hospital in Pune, shared, "A brain tumour is a growth of unusual cells in the brain and can be cancerous or non-cancerous. Just like adults, brain tumours are also a common occurrence in children. It is a known fact that brain tumours are linked to higher morbidity and mortality rates in people of all age groups including children. Timely diagnosis and treatment will help children to improve their quality of life. Parents should pay attention to these signs and symptoms to be able to seek further medical attention and save the child's life."

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The expert highlighted the following signs and symptoms of brain tumour in children -

• Nausea and vomiting: While these symptoms can mimic common ailments like the flu, their persistence, especially when accompanied by headaches, may indicate increased intracranial pressure associated with a brain tumor.

• Persistent headaches: Children with brain tumors often experience chronic headaches, particularly if they worsen in the morning. Persistent and worsening headaches should prompt immediate medical attention.

• Speech, vision and hearing difficulties: Depending on the tumor's location, children may exhibit various sensory impairments, such as vision or hearing loss, as well as speech difficulties. Parents should promptly consult a doctor if they observe any such symptoms.

• Balance problems: Tumours near the brain stem can disrupt the body's balance mechanism, leading to coordination difficulties and imbalance in affected children.

• Behavioural changes: Any noticeable changes in a child's behavior, including mood swings, withdrawal from activities, irritability or aggression, should be promptly addressed and evaluated by a healthcare professional.

• Seizures: Brain tumours, especially those situated on the brain's surface, can trigger seizures in affected children. Proper evaluation is essential to determine the underlying cause of seizures and initiate appropriate treatment.

Dr Shiji Chalipat concluded, “Early diagnosis of brain tumours in children allows healthcare providers to tailor treatment plans based on factors such as tumour location, size and type. Parents play a critical role in recognising and responding to potential warning signs, ensuring their child receives timely medical and surgical intervention and the best possible chance for a favorable outcome.”

Infections

Essential measures to safeguard children from getting infections during rainy season (Hindustan Times: 20240626)

https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/monsoon-health-tips-for-kids-essential-measures-to-safeguard-children-from-getting-infections-during-rainy-season-101719158671155.html

As monsoon season hits different parts of our country, check out these tips to safeguard your children from rainy season related ailments

Monsoon season brings with it a lot of moisture into the air which is the primary reason behind the upsurge of harmful suspended particles in the air that can affect children. Chances of falling sick increase, making it essential to take necessary precautions to ensure the safety and health of our kids.

Essential measures to safeguard children from getting infections during rainy season (Photo by Sunil Ghosh / Hindustan Times)

Essential measures to safeguard children from getting infections during rainy season (Photo by Sunil Ghosh / Hindustan Times)

It is no secret that the dirty rainwater or puddles can become breeding grounds for various harmful germs - bacteria, viruses and insects which children can come in contact with while playing outdoors causing infections. Similarly, drinking water can become dirty and contaminated due to germs during heavy rain which potentially increases the risk of contracting gastrointestinal infections.

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In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Abhimanyu Sengupta, Senior Consultant Paediatrician at Ankura Hospital for Women and Children in Pune, shared, “Fluctuation in temperature and cold and damp air can be harmful to children leading to infections related to the nose and throat as well as allergic respiratory disorders resulting in obstruction of the breathing passages.”

He highlighted that there is an increased risk of developing the following diseases during the rainy season in children -

1. Gastrointestinal diseases: This can be caused due to various reasons such as eating street food that was made in an open area or unclean surroundings where the chances of food contamination increase. Drinking or eating food and liquids that are exposed to various harmful germs can lead to experiencing symptoms like diarrhea, pain in abdomen, bloating and episodes of vomiting. Food poisoning is common so adequate precautions need to be followed.

2. Respiratory infection: Sudden changes in the temperature can promote propagation and transmission of respiratory germs and weaken children's immune systems, making them more prone to being affected with respiratory infections. Heavy rain can significantly contribute to air pollution which can pose a danger to children. By inhaling this polluted air, children can experience various respiratory-related issues like cough, sore throat, sneezing, wheezing and cold.

3. Dengue and malaria: Water stored in open containers or buckets for various household purposes can become shelter for dangerous mosquitoes like Aedes and Anopheles, which are vectors of dengue and malaria respectively. These mosquitoes breed in stagnant water, puddles, and water in flower pots, and containers. Children can experience various symptoms like fever, excessive sweating, chills, fatigue, pain behind their eyes, and skin irritation and rashes.

Talking about tips to safeguard your children from rainy season related ailments, Dr Abhimanyu Sengupta suggested -

1. Children should avoid wading through the rainwater.

2. Keep the surroundings clean, do not let water stagnate near the house or in pots, tyres, or drums - to reduce the risk of dengue and malaria.

3. Wear appropriate clothing like full-sleeved t-shirts with jeans or pants, which can easily cover the entire body to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes.

4. Avoid eating street food or junk food which is prepared in outdoor spaces where there is an increased chance of contamination due to harmful germs; instead try eating home cooked healthy fresh food.

5. Parents must ensure the child eats a well-balanced diet that boosts immunity.

6. Get into a shower after coming from outdoors especially during heavy rainfall, to wash off the germs.

7. Don't self-medicate when it comes to fever and cold in children or try any home remedy. The child should be taken to the doctor for prompt medical attention before the symptoms worsen.

8. Restrict your children from frequently touching or rubbing their eyes with dirty and unwashed hands as it can increase the risk of eye infection.

kidney health

Unveiling hidden dangers of obesity's impact on kidney health (Hindustan Times: 20240626)

https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/obesitys-hidden-risks-for-your-kidneys-expert-tips-to-manage-weight-gain-for-better-kidney-health-101719154171417.html

Critical link between obesity and kidney disease: Know expert tips to manage weight gain for better kidney health

Obesity is not just a matter of physical appearance; it is a complex health issue with far-reaching consequences. It is crucial to bring to attention the urgent need for awareness and action in managing this health crisis.

Obesity, a Growing Epidemic:

The global rise in obesity is alarming, affecting millions and posing serious health risks beyond the surface. According to National Family Health Survey 5, 22.9% men and 24% women are overweight in India. In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Aparna Govil Bhasker, Consultant Bariatric and Laparoscopic Surgeon at MetaHeal - Laparoscopy and Bariatric Surgery Center in Mumbai and Saifee, Apollo and Namaha Hospitals in Mumbai, shared, “It's not just about weight gain but a cascade of health challenges associated with it, including metabolic (diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol issues), cardio-vascular (heart disease), orthopaedic (joint pains), lung and liver disease, risk of certain cancers, PCOD and mental health issues like depression and anxiety.”

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Impact on Kidney Health:

Dr Aparna Govil Bhasker revealed, “One of the lesser-known but significant impacts of obesity is on kidney health. Obesity's role in diabetes and hypertension further compounds this risk, making kidney problems a looming threat for those battling weight issues.” She listed some of the ways in which obesity affect the kidneys adversely -

Proteinuria: Proteinuria is often a sign of kidney damage. It has a significant association with central obesity. It often goes undiagnosed as it does not have any clinical symptoms.

Sub-nephrotic syndrome: Patients with obesity may develop a sub-clinical nephrotic syndrome. Unlike the typical rapid onset of nephrotic syndrome, this condition progresses slowly over several years. Nevertheless, obesity increases the risk of kidney dysfunction in affected individuals.

Progression to end stage kidney disease (ESKD): Individuals with obesity have a 3 times higher risk of developing ESKD as compared to those with normal weight.

Kidney stones: Individuals with obesity have a higher risk of developing kidney stones.

Problems during dialysis: Individuals with obesity face more challenges with iv line insertions due to higher levels of fatty tissue under the skin. Time taken for dialysis and its frequency may also be higher. It is also more difficult to achieve dry weight after dialysis.

Kidney transplant: Transplant recipients with severe obesity have a higher rate of delayed graft function, wound infection and rejection. Though the BMI cut off limits for transplant have been increased, it is still one of the leading causes of being inactive on transplant list.

Cancer: The risk of kidney cancers increases by 35% in overweight individuals and by 76% in individuals with obesity in comparison to normal weight people, irrespective of the gender.

Fatty kidney: Fat accumulation around the kidney is said to play a role in kidney dysfunction in individuals with obesity. It can have toxic effects on kidneys and lead to an increase in kidney damage.

Other effects: Obesity is associated with obstructive sleep apnoea and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). Both of these conditions have been shown to add to the loss of kidney function.

Understanding the Mechanisms:

Dr Aparna Govil Bhasker informed, “Obesity harms kidneys in three ways: by causing inflammation that directly damages kidney tissues, by disrupting hormonal balance (like insulin and leptin), and by accumulating excess fat around the kidneys, which strains their function. Additionally, obesity is often linked to conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure, both of which can independently lead to kidney damage. These combined effects emphasize the critical importance of managing obesity to protect kidney health.”

Tackling Obesity for Kidney Wellness:

Emphasising a holistic approach for tackling obesity and focusing on sustainable lifestyle changes rather than quick fixes, Dr Aparna Govil Bhasker advised, “Small but consistent adjustments like increasing physical activity, opting for whole foods over processed ones, and addressing emotional eating patterns are key. individuals may also explore the role of anti-obesity medications under the guidance of their nephrologist.”

Role of metabolic/bariatric surgery in kidney disease:

Dr Aparna Govil Bhasker explained, “Metabolic/bariatric surgery, encompasses surgical procedures aimed at reducing obesity and improving metabolic abnormalities. The most common surgeries in India include vertical sleeve gastrectomy, Roux-en-Y gastric bypass, and mini gastric bypass. Choosing the most suitable procedure requires consultation with a bariatric surgery team along with a nephrologist. Surgical intervention for obesity has significantly enhanced the management of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in both diabetic and non-diabetic patients, leading to a reduced rate of decline of kidney function towards end-stage kidney disease (ESKD).”

She elaborated, “Even in established ESKD cases, bariatric surgery remains a generally safe intervention with low complication rates. Bariatric surgery can also be performed for a patient with obesity before kidney transplantation. It increases the possibility of getting a transplantation and having better outcomes later. Similarly, it may offer benefits as a treatment option for potential obese kidney donors. Obesity's impact on kidney health is a pressing concern that demands attention.”

With informed choices, support from healthcare professionals, and a commitment to lifestyle changes, individuals can pave the way towards a healthier, kidney-friendly future. For more information and guidance on managing obesity and kidney health, consult a qualified healthcare professional.

Yoga for lungs

Yoga for lungs: Effective exercises for enhancing lung capacity and easing breathing (Hindustan Times: 20240626)

https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/strengthen-your-lungs-with-yoga-key-poses-techniques-holistic-approach-for-respiratory-health-101719148768381.html

Here's how Yoga can improve your lung capacity and ease symptoms of respiratory conditions

Yoga experts claim that this fitness practice offers a holistic approach to improving lung capacity and managing respiratory conditions by combining breathing techniques, strengthening exercises, stress reduction and mindful movement. In other words, Yoga offers several benefits for improving lung capacity and easing symptoms of respiratory conditions.

Yoga for lungs: Effective exercises for enhancing lung capacity and easing breathing (Photo by Mor Shani on Unsplash)

Yoga for lungs: Effective exercises for enhancing lung capacity and easing breathing (Photo by Mor Shani on Unsplash)

In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Himalayan Siddhaa Akshar, Founder of Akshar Yoga Kendraa, asserted that by incorporating Yoga into a regular routine, individuals can experience enhanced respiratory function, reduced symptoms and improved overall well-being. Here's how -

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Breathing Techniques (Pranayama): Pranayama focuses on breath control and can significantly enhance lung function. Techniques like deep breathing, diaphragmatic breathing, and alternate

nostril breathing can expand lung capacity, increase oxygen intake, and improve respiratory efficiency.

Strengthening Respiratory Muscles: Yoga poses (asanas) such as Cobra Pose (Bhujangasana), Bridge Pose (Setu Bandhasana), and Fish Pose (Matsyasana) engage and strengthen the muscles involved in breathing, including the diaphragm and intercostal muscles. Stronger respiratory muscles enhance lung capacity and efficiency.

Improving Posture: Poor posture can restrict lung expansion and reduce respiratory function. Yoga helps correct posture imbalances by promoting alignment and awareness of body positioning. Poses like Mountain Pose (Tadasana) and Warrior Pose (Virabhadrasana) encourage proper spinal alignment, allowing for better lung expansion and airflow.

Reducing Stress: Chronic stress can exacerbate respiratory conditions and impair lung function. Yoga's emphasis on relaxation, mindfulness, and stress reduction techniques like meditation and deep breathing can alleviate stress, enhance mental well-being, and improve overall respiratory health.

Enhancing Lung Flexibility: Certain Yoga poses involve stretching and expanding the chest and ribcage, which can enhance lung flexibility and capacity. Poses like Camel Pose (Ustrasana), Bow Pose (Dhanurasana), and Cow Pose (Bitilasana) encourage deep inhalation and full expansion of the lungs.

Increasing Oxygen Circulation: Yoga practices that emphasize controlled breathing and mindful movement improve oxygen circulation throughout the body. This enhanced oxygenation supports overall respiratory health, boosts energy levels, and reduces symptoms of respiratory conditions like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Promoting Relaxation Response: Yoga stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, triggering the body's relaxation response. This relaxation response can help alleviate symptoms associated with respiratory conditions such as wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness.

Boosting Immune Function: Regular Yoga practice has been shown to strengthen the immune system, reducing the risk of respiratory infections and illnesses. By enhancing immune function, Yoga can help prevent exacerbations of respiratory conditions and promote faster recovery from respiratory-related ailments.

Improving Lung Efficiency: Yoga encourages mindful breathing techniques that optimize lung function and efficiency. By practicing conscious breathing patterns, individuals can improve their respiratory rate, tidal volume and overall lung ventilation, leading to better oxygen exchange and carbon dioxide elimination.

Supporting Lifestyle Modifications: Incorporating Yoga into a comprehensive treatment plan for respiratory conditions can support other lifestyle modifications such as smoking cessation, maintaining a healthy weight, and avoiding environmental triggers that exacerbate respiratory symptoms.

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Rising temperatures

Rising temperatures, longer monsoons make dengue constant danger in South Asia; tips to address this evolving threat (Hindustan Times: 20240626)

https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/dengue-beyond-monsoon-prevention-tips-as-climate-change-high-temperatures-fuel-mosquito-disease-outbreak-in-south-asia-101719042617617.html

No longer a monsoon illness, dengue fever is now year-round public health threat in South Asia due to climate change | Prevention tips and all you need to know

In recent years, the term “seasonal” has lost its relevance when discussing diseases like dengue fever because once thought to be confined to specific times of the year, dengue outbreaks have now become a year-round nightmare, especially in regions like South Asia courtesy the culprit - climate change. The convergence of longer monsoon seasons, rising temperatures and altered mosquito behaviours has shattered the traditional understanding of dengue's seasonality, transforming it into a perpetual threat that knows no boundaries.

Rising temperatures, longer monsoons make dengue constant danger in South Asia; tips to address this evolving threat (HT_PRINT)

Rising temperatures, longer monsoons make dengue constant danger in South Asia; tips to address this evolving threat (HT_PRINT)

In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Prasad Phadke, Founder and CEO at Eco BioTraps and Susanta Kumar Ghosh, Scientific Advisor and Former ICMR-National Institute of Malaria Research in Bangalore, revealed, “The severity of the situation became starkly apparent in November 2023 when Bangladesh faced its worst-ever dengue outbreak. Hospitals overflowed with patients and the death toll continued to rise. What made this outbreak particularly alarming was the deviation from the expected seasonal pattern.”

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Historically, dengue was associated with the monsoon season, typically between June and September, when stagnant water provided the perfect breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes, the carriers of the dengue virus. However, the landscape has shifted and these mosquitoes are now moving towards the north and more European countries are under the threat of dengue fever.

According to Prasad Phadke and Susanta Kumar Ghosh, climate change has disrupted traditional weather patterns, leading to longer and more intense monsoon rains across South Asia. They shared, “In July 2023, the monsoon was 13 percent above the long-term average, exacerbating the dengue crisis. While flooding ravaged many parts of India, certain districts experienced unexpected outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases like dengue fever. In 2022, Pakistan, too, has faced similar challenges, indicating a regional crisis of unprecedented proportions.”

The underlying issue lies in the changing behaviour of Aedes mosquitoes, which have adapted to new environmental conditions brought about by global warming. Prasad Phadke and Susanta Kumar Ghosh explained, “These mosquitoes no longer adhere to the conventional breeding grounds of clean water during the monsoon season. Instead, they have demonstrated a remarkable ability to breed even in saline water. This newfound resilience renders conventional insecticides ineffective, as the mosquitoes have developed resistance over time. Moreover, the concept of “seasonality” has lost its meaning as temperatures soar and rainfall patterns become erratic. Dengue is no longer confined to a specific time frame but has become a constant threat, lurking throughout the year. As people find themselves exposed to mosquitoes for longer durations, the likelihood of contracting dengue multiplies, amplifying the public health crisis.”

Addressing this evolving threat requires a multifaceted approach that acknowledges the intertwined nature of climate change and disease dynamics. Prasad Phadke and Susanta Kumar Ghosh suggested -

First, there is an urgent need for enhanced surveillance and monitoring systems to detect and respond to outbreaks promptly. Early detection can help mitigate the spread of the virus and alleviate the burden on healthcare systems.

Secondly, efforts to combat mosquito-borne diseases must evolve to keep pace with changing mosquito behaviors and environmental conditions. This includes research into alternative vector control methods and innovative approaches to mosquito management.

Additionally, public awareness campaigns play a crucial role in empowering communities to take preventive measures against dengue. Simple actions such as eliminating stagnant water, using mosquito nets, and wearing protective clothing can significantly reduce the risk of infection.

On a broader scale, addressing the root cause of the problem requires concerted global action to mitigate climate change. By reducing greenhouse gas emissions and investing in sustainable practices, we can limit the extent of global warming and mitigate its impact on public health.

The experts asserted, “The notion of dengue as a seasonal disease is no longer tenable in the face of climate change. The convergence of environmental factors has transformed dengue into a year-round threat, posing significant challenges to public health systems in affected regions. To confront this crisis, we must adopt a comprehensive approach that encompasses surveillance, vector control, public awareness, and climate mitigation efforts. Only through collective action can we hope to stem the tide of dengue and protect vulnerable communities from its devastating impact.”

Preeclampsia

Preeclampsia can be fatal for pregnant people and babies; new blood tests aim to show who's at (Hindustan Times: 20240626)

https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/preeclampsia-can-be-fatal-for-pregnant-people-and-babies-new-blood-tests-aim-to-show-whos-at-risk-101719296295531.html

Preeclampsia affects both the mother and baby and can occur in the second half of pregnancy or the postpartum period. The exact causes aren’t known.

When you're expecting a baby, you hope nothing goes wrong. But at least one in 20 people who are pregnant develop a scary complication called preeclampsia, a high blood pressure disorder that kills 70,000 women and 500,000 babies worldwide every year.

At least one in 20 pregnant patients develops a scary complication called preeclampsia, a high blood pressure disorder that kills 70,000 women and 500,000 babies worldwide every year. (AP)

At least one in 20 pregnant patients develops a scary complication called preeclampsia, a high blood pressure disorder that kills 70,000 women and 500,000 babies worldwide every year. (AP)

There was no way to know when it might strike — until now. New blood tests may help doctors predict and manage this dangerous condition.

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“When something bad happens in pregnancy, you want to catch it early so you can avoid adverse outcomes for the mom and the baby,” said Dr S Ananth Karumanchi with Cedars-Sinai in Los

Angeles. (Also Read | Jaideep Ahlawat lost 26 kgs in 5 months for Maharaj! Shares before-after pics)

What is preeclampsia?

The condition affects both the mother and baby and can occur in the second half of pregnancy or the postpartum period. The exact causes aren't known.

Besides high blood pressure, other signs of preeclampsia include protein in the urine, severe headaches, changes in vision, nausea and sudden swelling in your face and hands. It's generally diagnosed by checking for protein in the urine, measuring blood pressure and following up with other tests if warranted.

Once you have preeclampsia, it can progress rapidly and cause organ damage, stroke, preterm birth, slow growth in the baby and other problems.

To prevent the condition, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends pregnant patients get low-dose aspirin if they have one or more particular risk factors, such as chronic high blood pressure, Type 1 or 2 diabetes before pregnancy or kidney disease.

The primary treatment for preeclampsia is to deliver the baby or manage the condition until the baby can be delivered. People with severe preeclampsia are usually hospitalized and may be given medicines to lower blood pressure, prevent seizures and help the fetus' lungs develop.

How do the new tests work?

The tests measure "biomarkers" for preeclampsia in the blood, objective measures that show what's happening in an organism at any given moment.

At this point, there are only a few tests on the market.

One, by Labcorp, is designed to be performed between 11 and 14 weeks gestation on any pregnant patient. It measures four early pregnancy biomarkers that, combined with other factors, help determine the risk of developing preeclampsia before 34 weeks of pregnancy.

Two other tests — another by Labcorp and one from Thermo Fisher Scientific — are used in the second and third trimesters on hospitalized patients to assess whether they are at risk of progressing to severe preeclampsia within a couple of weeks. More tests by other companies are in the pipeline.

“They absolutely represent an exciting advancement, especially when you look at the field of preeclampsia and the fact that there’s been very little new introduced to the field in decades,” said Eleni Tsigas, CEO of the nonprofit Preeclampsia Foundation. She lost one baby and also nearly died because of undiagnosed preeclampsia about two decades ago, and developed it again in her second pregnancy and gave birth to a son who spent time in neonatal intensive care.

The new blood tests augment but don’t replace a doctor’s judgment, she added, “basically giving them insight that they haven’t had before. And that’s particularly useful in cases where things are in the gray zone,” such as when you have preexisting health problems such as chronic high blood pressure or obesity.

Should you ask for a test?

“If I were pregnant today then I absolutely would,” Tsigas said.

Though “there’s no therapy right at the moment," Karumanchi said, doctors can closely watch those at higher risk and do more follow-ups with them. For patients shown to be at low risk, the tests offer reassurance.

The tests could also help speed up the development of new treatments, he said, because researchers can identify patients at risk who might be willing to join studies.

Still, some OB-GYNs may not offer the tests immediately because they are so new, Tsigas said. But she figures: Why wait?

“You just have to look at the mortality and morbidity rates related to preeclampsia to know that clearly we have work to do,” she said. "So I don’t think there’s a downside to adding tools to a nearly empty toolbox.”

Non-coffee drinkers

Sedentary, non-coffee drinkers at 60 per cent more risk of dying, study finds (The Tribune: 20240626)

This indicates an increased risk of dying in sedentary people not consuming coffee

https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/sedentary-non-coffee-drinkers-at-60-per-cent-more-risk-of-dying-study-finds-634016

Sedentary, non-coffee drinkers at 60 per cent more risk of dying, study finds

“The benefits of coffee consumption in improving overall survival in adults compared to sedentary behaviour are manifold,” the authors wrote in the study. Thinkstock photo

Non-coffee drinkers who sat for six or more hours a day were at almost 60 per cent higher risk of dying compared to coffee drinkers sitting for less than six hours, according to a research published in the journal BioMed Central Public Health.

This indicated an increased risk of dying in sedentary people not consuming coffee, but not among those drinking coffee, researchers following over 10,000 adults in the US for up to 13 years said.

The researchers at the Medical College of Soochow University’s School of Public Health in China also found that sedentary coffee drinkers were at a 24 per cent lower risk of death compared to non-coffee drinkers sitting for at least six hours a day.

The result, not featuring in the study, was calculated at The Washington Post’s request, according to the media website’s report.

“The benefits of coffee consumption in improving overall survival in adults compared to sedentary behaviour are manifold,” the authors wrote in the study.

Consuming coffee lowers risk of metabolic problems known to worsen inflammation, which contributes to heightening death risks because of sedentary behaviour, they said.

In their study, the authors found that the risk of dying from any cause significantly lowered—by 33 per cent—among a fourth of all the participants consuming highest amounts of coffee compared to non-coffee drinkers.

The results were consistent with those from previous studies, which have found a link between drinking more coffee and a lowered risk of dying from any cause and heart disease, they said.

Compounds present in coffee, including caffeine and polyphenols, are anti-inflammatory in nature. However, how exactly coffee works in the body to lower risk of dying is still unclear, the researchers said.

Further, the team also found that sitting for more than eight hours a day was linked with over 40 per cent higher risk of death from any cause and almost 80 per cent higher risk of dying due to heart disease.

For their analysis, the researchers used data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, which follows Americans' health and nutrition.

"Given that coffee is a complex compound, further research is needed to explore this miracle compound," the authors wrote.

Aging

Being lonely for long may raise stroke risk in elderly (The Tribune: 20240626)

https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/being-lonely-for-long-may-raise-stroke-risk-in-elderly-634014

Those in the ‘consistently high’ loneliness group had a 56 per cent higher risk of stroke than those in the ‘consistently low’ group

Being lonely for long may raise stroke risk in elderly

The “study suggests loneliness may play an important role in stroke incidence,” said lead author Yenee Soh, research associate in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Representative/iStock

Older adults who remain lonely for a prolonged period may be at 56 per cent higher risk of suffering a stroke, according to a new study on Tuesday.

The World Health Organisation in 2023 declared loneliness as a pressing global health threat with a mortality effect equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

While previous research has linked loneliness to a higher risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, the new study by researchers at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health in the US examined the association between loneliness changes and stroke risk over time.

The “study suggests loneliness may play an important role in stroke incidence, which is already one of the leading causes of long-term disability and mortality worldwide,” said lead author Yenee Soh, research associate in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

The study, published in the eClinicalMedicine journal, was based on 8,936 participants aged 50 and above who never had a stroke.

The results showed that participants lonely for a short duration had a 25 per cent higher risk of stroke. However, those in the 'consistently high' loneliness group had a 56 per cent higher risk of stroke than those in the 'consistently low' group, even after accounting for a broad range of other known risk factors.

In the study, people experiencing loneliness at one time had higher stroke risk. Those who experienced remitting or recent onset loneliness did not show a clear pattern of increased risk of stroke.

It "suggests that loneliness' impact on stroke risk occurs over the longer term," the researchers said.

Elders

Elders are ailing, alone and without the means to support themselves, finds Helpage India study (The Tribune: 20240626)

https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/elders-are-ailing-alone-and-without-the-means-to-support-themselves-finds-helpage-india-study/article68308346.ece

Among those surveyed, one in every three elderly respondents, irrespective of the city they lived in, reported no income in the past year

Only 29% of those surveyed had access to social security schemes such as an old age pension, a contributory pension or a provident fund.

Only 29% of those surveyed had access to social security schemes such as an old age pension, a contributory pension or a provident fund. | Photo Credit: Getty Images

A study by HelpAge India of a cross-section of elders across the country found that only 15% of them had a source of income. Among them, 24% were men and 7% were women. Around 29% were supported by their children financially. At least 79% of the elders surveyed used government hospitals, and only 31% had health insurance. Very few among those surveyed (15%) knew of the existence of exclusive geriatric facilities.

The study was released in Chennai on June 15, which is observed as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Heart and kidney

Yes, heatwaves affect not just the heart and kidney but also your skin (Indian Express: 20240626)

https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/life-style/yes-heatwaves-affect-not-just-the-heart-and-kidney-but-also-your-skin-9408205/

Some sunscreens can clog pores, especially if they are not non-comedogenic, leading to breakouts, said Dr Jatin Mittal, co-founder, cosmetologist and skin expert from Abhivrit Aesthetics New

pimpleAre you also experiencing breakouts? (Source: Freepik)

Heatwave is an extreme weather condition where the temperature rises abnormally, resulting in discomfort and health issues. It can affect everyone: plants and animals, but mainly humans. Surviving in extreme temperatures can be challenging and lead to various health problems such as dehydration, heavy sweating, fluctuating heartbeats, and worsened cardiovascular health. There's a lot of strain put on the body to cool itself during a heatwave, especially on heart and kidney health.

"Individual's blood pressure significantly drops, as the blood vessels start to open to combat extreme heat. This can result in symptoms such as rashes, swollen feet, and fatigue as the blood vessels leak. Heatwave can also worsen skin health by making it appear dry, dehydrated, sensitive, and lead to breakouts," said Dr Harish Chafle, senior consultant, intensivist chest physician, bronchoscopists and sleep disorders specialist.

ICMR-backed NCAHT

ICMR-backed NCAHT launches assistive tech products for visually challenged(New Kerala: 20240626)

https://www.newkerala.com/news/2024/36752.htm

he Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-supported National Centre for Assistive Health Technologies (NCAHT) on Tuesday launched various assistive technology products for visually challenged people at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi.

The assistive technology innovations included -- Shapescapes (a geometry learning kit), high-quality White Canes, and an Accessible Kit for STEM Education.

'Shapescape' is a geometry learning kit to overcome challenges faced by visually challenged students in teaching/learning concepts of geometry.

NCAHT has created a kit that allows students to use it in a DIY (do it yourself) manner. This low-cost assistive aid is designed with principles of universal design in mind and can be used by sighted, low-vision, and visually challenged students.

The 'white cane' is a fundamental assistive technology used by visually challenged people for independent and safe mobility. Kenstel Communications, in collaboration with IIT Delhi, has developed a high-quality white cane, which has been an unmet need for a long time.

Moreover, the 'accessible kit for STEM education' has been developed to overcome challenges faced by visually challenged students in learning concepts of electronics such as logic gates, electronic components, circuits, etc.

The kit also includes a self-learning book with concepts explained through tactile diagrams, large print, and Braille. Both of these products will be manufactured by the Raised Lines Foundation, a not-for-profit social enterprise from IIT Delhi.

The NCAHT also announced that large-scale user trials of SmartCane Version 2 and Refreshable Braille Display have begun.

These innovations, co-created with Saksham Trust, Delhi, will empower visually challenged people in their independent mobility and education.

SmartCane is an electronic travel aid and is currently used by about 150,000 people in India and abroad. SmartCane Version 2 is an improved version of the earlier product.

It has been developed with improved usability and user experience and has overcome additional pain points for users and obsolescence.

Moreover, the Assistech Lab at IIT Delhi, in collaboration with Phoenix Medical Systems and Saksham Trust, has developed Tacread, a new refreshable Braille technology, to enable visually challenged users to access digital text from various sources in Braille format.

With this technology, a visually challenged person, for example, can access any book in Braille format from Sugmya Pustakalaya, India's first and largest collection

Alcohol and drug

Alcohol and drug use claimed more than 3 mn lives in 2019: WHO(New Kerala: 20240626)

https://www.newkerala.com/news/2024/36661.htm

lcohol consumption and psychoactive drug use claimed more than three million lives in 2019, according to a new report from the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Tuesday.

Alcohol and drug use claimed more than 3 mn lives in 2019: WHO

The WHO's Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders, based on 2019 data, showed that 2.6 million deaths per year were attributable to alcohol consumption, accounting for 4.7 per cent of all deaths in that year, and 0.6 million deaths to drug use.

Of these, 2 million of alcohol and 0.4 million of drug-attributable deaths were among men.

"Substance use severely harms individual health, increasing the risk of chronic diseases, and mental health conditions, and tragically resulting in millions of preventable deaths every year. It places a heavy burden on families and communities, increasing exposure to accidents, injuries, and violence," WHO Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

"To build a healthier, more equitable society, we must urgently commit to bold actions that reduce the negative health and social consequences of alcohol consumption and make treatment for substance use disorders accessible and affordable," he added.

The report also showed that low-income countries account for the highest death rates due to alcohol consumption, while high-income countries had the lowest rates.

Importantly, an estimated 1.6 million deaths related to alcohol consumption were from non-communicable diseases, including 474,000 deaths from cardiovascular diseases and 401,000 from cancer. Some 724,000 deaths were due to injuries, such as those from traffic crashes, self-harm, and interpersonal violence. Another 284,000 deaths were linked to communicable diseases, like HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis.

Young people aged 20-39 years accounted for the highest proportion (13 per cent) of alcohol-attributable deaths in 2019, said the report.

It called for "an urgent need to accelerate actions globally towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.5 by 2030 by reducing alcohol and drug consumption and improving access to quality treatment for substance use disorders".

Tick-borne virus

Docs call for more surveillance as Pak sees deadly tick-borne virus outbreak (New Kerala: 20240626)

https://www.newkerala.com/news/2024/36606.htm

ncreased active human, animal, and entomological (of insects) surveillance is needed to keep the deadly Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) at bay, said health experts on Tuesday, as the disease reportedly infected 13 in Pakistan.

The CCHF is caused by a tick-borne Nairovirus.

Animals such as cattle, goats, sheep, and hare carry the virus, which can be transmitted to humans through tick bites or contact with infected blood or tissues during and after slaughter.

The virus, known for its high fatality rate, can cause severe hemorrhagic fever, leading to symptoms like high fever, muscle pain, dizziness, bleeding from the nose, etc.

"The recent spread of the Congo virus in Pakistan is concerning and calls for stringent control measures in India as well," Dr Nidhin Mohan, Consultant, Internal Medicine, Narayana Health City, Bengaluru, told IANS.

"We must heighten surveillance, particularly in border areas, and educate the public on prevention methods such as using insect repellent and wearing protective clothing as well as cleaning any wound that has been caused by cattle; goats etc," he added.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), CCHF has a mortality rate of up to 40 per cent and is difficult to prevent or treat.

It is also on the WHO's list of 'priority' diseases and was found last year in Eastern Europe, France, Spain, and Namibia.

In 2023, CCHF affected hundreds and caused deaths in Iraq and Pakistan.

"Clinical features are very similar to dengue (high-grade fever, vomiting and headache). In India, overlapping symptoms of hemorrhagic fevers like dengue, Kyasanur forest disease, Hantavirus hemorrhagic fever, and other diseases (Malaria, meningococcal infections, and leptospirosis) are of major concern," Dr Dhiren Gupta, Co-Director PICU, Paediatric Pulmonology and Allergy, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, told IANS.

The experts called for early diagnosis through PCR testing, as ignoring symptoms can be deadly.

"Early diagnosis of CCHF is critical for the management of patients, to prevent the transmission of the disease to the community and potential nosocomial infections," Dr Dhiren said.

General supportive therapy is the mainstay of patient management in CCHF.

Intensive monitoring to guide volume and blood component replacement is required, the doctor said.

However, "there is no need not to panic. The government should start doing active human, animal, and entomological surveillance. Isolation and treatment of cases following universal precautions, contact tracing, and monitoring contacts, spraying cattle in the affected area with anti-tick agents, spraying human dwellings with residual sprays, and communicating the risk to the public should be done," Dr Dhiren said.

Strict measures and awareness can help remove the risk and control the spread of this deadly virus, the experts said.

✓ Docs call for more surveillance as Pak sees deadly tick-borne virus outbreak

Indian pharma

Indian pharma formulations sector to more than double to Rs 5.5 trn by 2034: Report (New Kerala: 20240626)

https://www.newkerala.com/news/2024/36598.htm

ndia's Domestic Pharma Formulations (DomForm) market, which includes branded generic medicines, is expected to more than double and cross Rs 5.5 trillion in the next 10 years at a CAGR of 10 per cent, according to a new report.

Indian pharma formulations sector to more than double to Rs 5.5 trn by 2034: Report

The report, by investment banking firm Avendus Capital, showed that currently the market is valued at Rs 2 trillion, with a growth rate of 11 per cent over the last 20 years.

However, with a gradual transition from a primarily doctor-branded prescription model, more stringent quality compliance, and government policies and regulatory measures, the market is expected to make a significant growth.

"We are encouraged by the government of India's Pharma Vision 2047, which is aimed at making medicines more equitable, accessible, and affordable while ensuring high quality and more sustainable manufacturing practices. We believe that the sector will more than double from today, comfortably crossing about Rs 5.5 trillion in value by 2034," the report said.

The report also predicted shifts in channel volumes, with trade generics and the unbranded "Generic Generics", including Jan Aushadhi centres and government hospital procurement, gaining more traction.

"We estimate that the DomForm market will continue growing at 9-10 per cent CAGR in the next 10 years. With the expansion of trade generics and Jan Aushadhi channels, we expect about 30 per cent volume contribution from these in 10 years," the report said.

Although off-patent generics currently account for nearly 100 per cent of the market, because of local manufacturing and process innovations, the prices of medicines are significantly lower than the global average.

Currently, more than 3,000 companies and almost 10,000 manufacturing units exist, yet they come with significant variations in quality standards.

Substandard, spurious and counterfeit drugs account for a staggering 20 per cent of the market, as per official testing.