

Health Updates- II
– News/New Researches
- Compiled

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17. Cure AIDS with love, says Elton John

IANS | Jul 25, 2012

Singer Elton John believes AIDS can be cured with love as that is what drives research into the potentially fatal disease.

"Maybe you think I am naive. Maybe you think I am off my rocker. Here I am telling an audience of 7,000 global health experts that you can end AIDS with love," he said at the AIDS 2012 international conference, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"But thanks to all this compassion, all this love, more than 8 million people are on treatment.. Thanks to people who have chosen to act, who have chosen to care, we can see an end to this epidemic..." he said.

"... but it's going to take a lot more compassion to get us there, a hell of a lot more," he added.

The 65-year-old went on to note that "shame and stigma" prevent many people from getting help with the condition and discussed his belief that everyone needs to feel that they matter in the world.

"We have inexpensive and accurate take-home tests for HIV. But we can't convince people to get tested if they think their lives don't count... Millions of people around the world feel ashamed because of who they are. They feel subhuman, worthless, like they don't matter at all," he said.

Referring to his recovery from cocaine addiction, he added: "I felt that shame before and it almost killed me. It's killing people all around the world. We have to replace the stigma with compassion."

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/music/news-and-interviews/Cure-AIDS-with-love-says-Elton-John/articleshow/15138284.cms>

18. As Swine Flu Deaths Rise Worldwide, US Schools Brace for "Nasty" Flu Season

05 Aug 2009

Following a recent World Health Organization (WHO) report that over 1,000 of 1,154 people who have died worldwide from the 2009 H1N1 [swine flu](#) pandemic were in the Americas, schools in the US brace themselves for a "nasty" [flu](#) season.

338 (nearly one third) of the deaths were reported in the last week of July, of which more than 300 were in the Americas.

A total of 168 countries and territories have now reported at least one lab confirmed case of pandemic swine flu, bringing the total reported number of cases worldwide to at least 162,380, said the WHO.

However, the global health agency explained that this number is likely to be a gross understatement of

the actual number of cases, since countries are no longer required to test and report individual cases.

Since 6 July, nine countries have newly reported their first case of pandemic [H1N1](#) flu: Azerbaijan, Gabon, Grenada, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Monaco, Nauru, Swaziland, Suriname.

In terms of how active the virus is, most countries in North and South America are reporting widespread activity (last update for this was in mid July), while in Europe only the UK and Portugal are seeing widespread activity. The rest of Europe and countries reporting from Asia are experiencing localized activity said the WHO.

They also said there is no evidence that the pandemic swine flu virus is mutating to a more dangerous form, all "viruses analyzed to date are antigenically and genetically similar".

However, six patients have been found to have strains of the virus that is resistant to oseltamivir ([Tamiflu](#)). These cases were in Denmark (1 patient), Hong Kong (1), Japan (3) and Canada (1). Five of the six patients had been given Tamiflu, and they have all recovered well.

The resistant strains all had the same characteristic mutation at position 274/275, associated with oseltamivir resistance, said the WHO.

Meanwhile, US schools are bracing for what could be a "nasty flu season", reports ABC News.

The US government is expected to release guidelines for principals and educators this Friday to help them prevent the spread of H1N1 swine flu.

There is a delicate balance to be struck between stemming the spread of the virus and the disruption that would be caused by closing schools, which is one of the actions that may be considered.

The knock-on effect could be considerable, not only disrupting schools but other workplaces too as parents juggle their work arrangements to look after children at home.

Other challenges for educators are how to make sure students don't fall behind in their studies.

In Georgia, where students have already gone back to school, Cindy Ball, director of community relations for Rockdale County Public Schools, told ABC News, that they were concerned about:

"How do you continue learning for students who are healthy?"

Source: WHO, ABC News.

Written by: Catharine Paddock, PhD

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/159820.php>

19. Childhood Obesity linked to Bladder, Urinary Cancer

IANS | Aug 5, 2012

Obesity in childhood has a direct link with bladder and urinary tract (urothelial) and colorectal cancers in adulthood, warn Israeli researchers.

Hence, maintaining a healthy weight has become a dire necessity. Besides extra pounds are tied to the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and joint and muscle pain.

Ari Shamiss and Adi Leiba of Tel Aviv University Sackler Faculty of Medicine and their fellow researchers conducted a longitudinal study of a cohort of 1.1 million males in the Israeli military, who were followed-up for 18 years, the journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention and Obesity* reports.

When they controlled for factors such as year of birth and education, the researchers discovered a clear link between childhood BMI, a height to weight index and those who were diagnosed with urothelial or colorectal cancers later in life, according to a Tel Aviv statement.

Shamiss believes that further research will reveal connections between childhood obesity and a wide range of other cancers, including pancreatic cancer, which he is currently researching.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health/Childhood-obesity-linked-to-bladder-urinary-cancer/articleshow/15122062.cms>

20. Breakthrough in making Malaria Vaccine

Aug 6, 2012

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Sydney: Australian researchers have made a major breakthrough in the quest for a vaccine against malaria, which snuffs out a million lives every year, particularly of children.

The findings show that people who develop immunity to malaria develop antibodies that primarily target a protein known as PfEMP1, which is produced by Plasmodium falciparum, causing most cases of malaria.

James Beeson, professor and senior study author at the Burnet Institute, Australia's largest virology and communicable disease research centre, said that these findings are a major advance towards developing an effective vaccine, the Journal of Clinical Investigation reports.

These findings unlock the mystery of which malaria proteins, known as variant surface antigens (VSAs), could be targeted by an effective vaccine to achieve immunity to malaria, according to a Burnet statement.

"A vaccine against malaria is urgently needed to reduce this disease globally and currently there is no licensed malaria vaccine available. The new findings support the idea that a vaccine could be developed that stimulates the immune system so that it specifically mounts a strong response (or attack) against the PfEMP1 protein that malaria produces," said Beeson.

Study co-author, Jo-Anne Chan said the findings also showed that when the immune system attacks other proteins that malaria produces, this is not as effective in protecting people. This emphasises that the immune system has to 'get it right' in order to fight malaria infection effectively.

Malaria is caused by a parasite that infects human red blood cells and replicates within them. While inside these cells, malaria parasites produce specific proteins that enable infected cells to stick and clog-up blood vessels in the body.

This clogging can occur in organs such as the brain and lungs, and the placenta in pregnant women, and causes severe illness and death.

IANS

<http://www.firstpost.com/living/breakthrough-in-making-malaria-vaccine-406586.html>

21. Weight Training helps reduce Diabetes Risk

ANI | Aug 7, 2012

Researchers say men who do weight training regularly—for example, for 30 minutes per day, five days per week—may be able to reduce their risk of type 2 diabetes by up to 34 per cent.

And if they combine weight training and aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking or running, they may be able to reduce their risk even further—up to 59 per cent.

The study by Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) and University of Southern Denmark researchers is the first to examine the role of weight training in the prevention of type 2 diabetes.

The results suggested that, because weight training appears to confer significant benefits independent of aerobic exercise, it could be a valuable alternative for people who have difficulty with the latter.

The researchers, including senior author Frank Hu, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at HSPH, followed 32,002 men from the Health Professionals Follow-up Study from 1990 to 2008.

The findings showed that even a modest amount of weight training may help reduce type 2 diabetes risk.

The researchers categorized the men according to how much weight training they did per week—between 1 and 59 minutes, between 60 and 149 minutes, and at least 150 minutes—and found that the training reduced their type 2 diabetes risk by 12 per cent, 25 per cent, and 34 per cent, respectively, compared with no weight training. Aerobic exercise is associated with significant benefits as well, the researchers found—it reduced the risk of type 2 diabetes by 7 per cent, 31 percent, and 52 per cent, respectively, for the three categories above.

The researchers also found that the combination of weight training and aerobic exercise confers the greatest benefits: Men who did more than 150 minutes of aerobics as well as at least 150 minutes of weight training per week had a 59 per cent reduced risk of type 2 diabetes.

Grontved said that further research is needed to confirm the results of the study as well as to analyze whether or not the findings can be generalized to women.

The study will be published online in *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health/Weight-training-helps-reduce-diabetes-risk/articleshow/15387269.cms>

22. Activists up in Arms against new Proposal on Health Care

Aarti Dhar

NEW DELHI, August 8, 2012

Health activists are up in arms against the Planning Commission for its proposal in the 12th Five Year Plan documents that seeks to restructure the country's health care system in a way that would effectively hand over health care to the corporate sector.

"It is particularly problematic that the Plan document to be adopted by the panel by the end of this month, invokes the concept of Universal Health Care, while it actually proposes a strategy that is far removed from the basic tenets of universal health care," Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, a conglomerate of rights-based health activists said here on Wednesday. The activists claimed that the Universal Health Coverage report had been "distorted and misinterpreted" by the Planning Commission.

Taking a serious note of the issue, Srinath Reddy, chairman of the now disbanded High Level Expert Group (HLEG), set up by the Planning Commission to draw a roadmap for universal health coverage for the country, has convened a meeting of the HLEG on Thursday to respond to the proposals.

At a press conference, the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan activists claimed that the Plan document recommends increase in public expenditure on health from the present one per cent to 1.58 per cent which is in sharp contrast to the HLEG recommendations of increasing the expenditure by at least 2.5 per cent of the gross domestic product. Secondly, it proposes that the Centre's share in the additional health expenditure would be less than half of what the States would contribute.

"What is of greater concern is the strategy proposed for re-structuring of the country's health system in the document that proposes a transition from the present system which is a mix of public sector service provision plus insurance, to a system of health care delivered by a managed network. There, is thus, a road map envisaged where the government would abandon its central role of providing health care and become primarily just a manager of the new system," Amit Sengupta of Jan Swasthya Abhiyan said.

He pointed out that the documents vision of 'universal provision of public health care' through preventive interventions which the government would be both funding and universally providing (like vaccination, neo-natal care and other non-profit services) and clinical services at different levels, defined in an essential health package, which the government would finance but not necessarily directly provide.

"This would mean that the government would over time confine itself to providing a small package services and would be primarily just a purchaser of virtually all clinical services from the corporatized private sector. The government would, thus, finance (with public money), strengthen and bolster an already resurgent corporate sector providing medical services," Jashodhara Dasgupta of Sahyog and

member of HLEG said adding that it would also decisively halt and eventually reverse the moderate achievements of the National Rural Health Mission in expanding public health infrastructure and services.

Also, the public health system will now be asked to compete with the private sector to attract patients. A system is envisaged where each citizen family would be entitled to an essential health package in the network of their choice. Besides, public facility networks organised, private and NGO providers would also be empanelled to give a choice to the families by strengthening the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana. Whereas, the HLEG in its report had recommended against any kind of insurance as these often resulted in inferior health outcomes and high health care cost inflation.

Reacting to the draft Plan documents, Dr Reddy told *The Hindu* that the public sector should remain as the main provider of universal health coverage and it is necessary to strengthen the public health infrastructure from the sub-centre to district level. The private health care providers may be contracted in to supplement the services if needed through a well defined regulatory process, he added.

<http://www.thehindu.com/health/article3742403.ece>

23. India Witnesses Sharp decline in HIV Cases

English.news.cn 2012-08-14

NEW DELHI, Aug. 14 (Xinhua) -- India Tuesday announced that the country had witnessed a sharp decline in the number of new HIV cases -- a 56 percent drop -- in the past 10 years.

"HIV infections have declined by 56 percent during the last decade from 2.7 lakh in 2000 to 1.2 lakh in 2009 in our country," Indian Health and Family Welfare Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said in the national capital.

"This has been possible due to political support at the highest levels to the various interventions under National AIDS Control Programme, including Parliamentarians and elected leaders at the state and local levels and cooperation received from NGOs, civil society, etc." the minister said while addressing an international HIV vaccine symposium.

Expressing similar sentiments, Minister of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Ashwani Kumar said that the government believes that the new HIV infections could be significantly reduced if effective prevention programs are expanded and reach those at greatest risk of HIV infection.

In fact, HIV -- which causes AIDS -- was detected in India nearly 25 years back.

Though more than 2 million people are affected by the virus, India is said to be one of the few countries which has actually made significant reductions in HIV infections. The country's HIV- AIDS prevention model has been even lauded by United Nations Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/health/2012-08/14/c_131784346.htm

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http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/health/2012-08/14/c_131784346.htm

25. Chemical in Lipsticks can cause Heart Problems

PTI

A chemical commonly used in lipsticks, handwashes and other personal care products may cause heart problems and muscle impairment, a new study has claimed.

Scientists at the University of California have found that triclosan, which is used in hundreds of household products, can hinder the process by which muscles, including the heart, receive signals from the brain.

In tests on mice, they noted a 'dramatic' 25 per cent reduction in heart function within 20 minutes of exposure, and warned there is 'strong evidence' it could affect human health.

However regulators and other experts insist triclosan levels in products are safe, and that the doses injected into the mice were higher than those to which humans would ever be exposed.

Previous studies have found that triclosan may have links to thyroid and fertility problems, this is the first time its effects have been tested on muscles.

Scientists had thought that the chemical — which was devised to prevent bacterial infections in hospitals — was metabolised quickly by the body without harmful effects.

However, the researchers at the University of California say it may remain active and be transported to organs, causing damage.

“Triclosan is found in virtually everyone’s home and is pervasive in the environment,” said Professor Isaac Pessah, who led the study, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

“These findings provide strong evidence that it is of concern to both human and environmental health,”

“For someone who is healthy a 10 per cent drop in heart function may not have an effect, but if you have heart disease it could make a big difference,” Pessah said.

His team injected a group of mice with triclosan. They saw a ‘significantly reduced’ function in the heart’s left ventricle within 20 minutes.

“The effects of triclosan on cardiac function were really dramatic,” said Nipavan Chiamvimonvat, Professor of cardiovascular medicine at UC Davis and a study co-author.

<http://www.thehindu.com/health/medicine-and-research/article3771115.ece>

26. Obese Youth have higher Risk of Gallstones: Study

Aug 25, 2012

Washington: Overweight children have significantly increased risk for gallstones, a new study has claimed.

According to a study by leading American health care provider Kaiser Permanente, children and adolescents who were overweight were twice as likely to have gallstone disease, compared to children and adolescents who have a normal body mass index.

“Although gallstones are relatively common in obese adults, gallstones in children and adolescents have been historically rare,” study lead author Corinna Koebnick said.

“These findings add to an alarming trend -- youth who are obese or extremely obese are more likely to have diseases we normally think of as adult conditions,” Koebnick added.

The study was based on information in the electronic health records of more than 5,10,000 children ages 10 to 19, from 2007 through 2009, who were members of Kaiser Permanente Southern California.

The researchers found that those who were moderately obese were four times as likely to have gallstones and those who were extremely obese were six times as likely to have gallstones.

The size and diversity of this population-based study allowed researchers to explore racial and ethnic disparities. Hispanic youth were more likely to have gallstones than youth of other races and ethnicities.

Girls who were obese and extremely obese were six and eight times more likely, respectively, to have gallstones than girls who were underweight or of normal weight, while obese and severely obese boys were more than twice and three times as likely to have gallstones as their normal or underweight counterparts.

Gallstone disease is a major health problem in the United States, affecting an estimated 20 million adults.

The study found that 7.3 per cent of boys and 5.5 per cent of girls under the age of 20 years are extremely obese.

The study was published in the Journal of Paediatric Gastroenterology & Nutrition.

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/obese-youth-have-higher-risk-of-gallstones-study/993070/>

27. Happiness Gene discovered - but it only works for Women

August 25, 2012

London: Scientists have discovered a gene that makes people happy, but it is said to work only in women.

The findings could help explain why women are often happier than men, the predominantly female team of US researchers said.

The study focused on a gene called MAOA that affects the levels of feel-good chemicals in the brain.

Almost 350 men and women were asked how happy they were and gave a saliva sample that was tested for their DNA.

The MAOA gene comes in two versions, a highly active and a less active type.

Women with the less active type were happier than others, the researchers found – and those with two copies of the “happy” type of MAOA had the sunniest dispositions of all.

Some 59 percent of the women studied had one copy and a lucky 17 percent had two – leaving only around one in four women lacking the happiness gene.

Many of the men in the study carried the gene but were no happier than others.

University of South Florida researcher Dr Henian Chen said this could be because its effects are cancelled out by testosterone – but boys may benefit.

“Maybe men are happier before adolescence because their testosterone level is lower,” the Daily Mail quoted him as saying.

The link was true even when other factors affecting wellbeing – from age to income – were taken into account.

But there was a downside – the happy version of the gene has been linked to alcoholism and anti-social behaviour.

“You may be more likely to get into trouble but still be happier than the next person,” Dr Chen said.

The findings are published in the journal *Progress in Neuro-Psychopharmacology and Biological Psychiatry*.

ANI

http://zeenews.india.com/news/health/health-news/happiness-gene-discovered-but-it-only-works-for-women_18492.html

28. New Device removes Clots from Brain

August 27, 2012

Washington: A new device that removes clots from the brain could be a game changer in the treatment of strokes, say researchers.

In a recent clinical trial, the SOLITAIRE Flow Restoration Device, approved by the US Food and Drug Administration this March, outperformed the standard treatment. SOLITAIRE is among an entirely new generation of devices designed to remove blood clots from blocked brain arteries.

It has a self-expanding, stent-like design, and once inserted into a blocked artery using a thin catheter tube, it compresses and traps the clot. The clot is then removed by withdrawing the device, reopening the blocked blood vessel, the British journal *The Lancet* reports.

"This new device is significantly changing the way we can treat ischemic stroke (caused by blockage of an artery to the brain)," said Jeffrey L. Saver, director of the University of California Los Angeles Stroke Centre and a professor of neurology at the David Geffen School of Medicine.

"We are going from our first generation of clot-removing procedures, which were only moderately good in reopening target arteries, to now having a highly effective tool," added Saver, who led the study, according to a California statement.

Results of the study showed that the device opened blocked vessels without causing symptomatic bleeding in or around the brain in 61 percent of patients.

The standard FDA-approved mechanical device, a corkscrew-type clot remover called the MERCI Retriever, was effective in 24 percent of cases. The use of SOLITAIRE also led to better survival three months after a stroke.

There was a 17.2 percent mortality rate with the new device, compared with a 38.2 percent rate with the older one.

About 87 percent of all strokes are caused by blood clots blocking a blood vessel supplying the brain.

The stroke treatment that has received the most study is an FDA-approved clot-busting drug known as tissue

plasminogen activator, but this drug must be given within four-and-a-half hours of the onset of stroke symptoms, and even more quickly in older patients.

When clot-busting drugs cannot be used or are ineffective, the clot can sometimes be mechanically removed during, or beyond, the four-and-a-half-hour window.

The current study, however, did not compare mechanical clot removal to drug treatment.

IANS

http://zeenews.india.com/news/health/health-news/new-device-removes-clots-from-brain_18507.html

29. Developed World's 'Kissing Disease' goes Viral in Capital

New Delhi: The city is literally under the weather of late and hospitals have reported a spurt in viral infections, especially the highly-infectious mononucleosis — also known as the “kissing disease” which is commonly found in the developed world.

Intermittent rains over the past fortnight have triggered a rise in cases of regular viral influenza and viral hepatitis, but doctors were surprised to witness mononucleosis — relatively uncommon in developing countries.

Mononucleosis often spreads through saliva and close contact, such as kissing, and hence the colloquial name.

Several hospitals said they detected cases of mononucleosis, caused by the Epstein-Barr virus, during laboratory tests of patients' blood and mucus samples.

“We have admitted four patients diagnosed with mononucleosis. It is considered that in developing countries, people are exposed to the virus at a young age and, hence, become immune to it. But we have discovered several cases during this season of viral outbreaks,”

Dr Rommel Tickoo, consultant of internal medicine in Max Hospital in Saket, said.

“It shares common symptoms with other viral diseases... fever, sore throat, loss of appetite, fall in platelets, fatigue and inflammation of the lymph nodes. Like other viral infections, it is self-limiting and symptomatic treatment cures a patient,” he said.

Dr Tickoo said at least two patients developed meningitis or brain fever — a complication of routine viral infections.

Doctors in Apollo Hospital said there have been suspected cases, but none of their patients have confirmed mononucleosis. “We have tested blood samples and fluid from lymph nodes of suspected patients. But no case has been confirmed. Since cases of viral diseases rise during the monsoon, it is not uncommon,” Dr S Chatterjee of Apollo Hospital said.

In Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, doctors said about five cases of mononucleosis have been confirmed. “Mononucleosis is not entirely linked to rain.

But seasonal changes do trigger a spurt in viral diseases,” Dr Atul Gogia said.

“In most people, the virus may be present in a mild form or may even be asymptomatic. Thus, it can go undetected unless proper screening tests are done,” he said.

Other monsoon-related diseases such as dengue and malaria have been less virulent this year. “The numbers are down. Unlike the usual complications expected from falciparum malaria, the vivax form has lost its mild strains and shows several complications,” Dr Gogia said.

The most common affliction this year has been viral fever — with flu-like symptoms, respiratory tract infections and dry cough.

“We have been getting a lot of cases of bronchial infections. Asthmatic people are the worst sufferers because lungs are the first to get affected by these viral strains,” Dr Tickoo said.

These apart, hospitals have also reported eye infections, especially conjunctivitis, and viral gastrointestinal diseases such as typhoid and hepatitis A and E. The last two are intrinsically linked to water and food.

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/developed-worlds-kissing-disease-goes-viral-in-capital/993503/>

30. Simple Keyhole Surgery can halve Heart Attack Risk

ANI | Aug 27, 2012

Doctors have said that a one-hour operation that could halve the risk of heart attacks in patients with high blood pressure could be available from next year.

In trials patients undergoing the keyhole procedure saw their blood pressure drop by a fifth within six months — enough to halve the risk of a heart attack or stroke.

A follow-up after 18-months showed no reversal of the condition. The trials proved so successful that some clinics have already made it available privately, and researchers expect the treatment to be made available to tens of thousands of British patients on the NHS.

The procedure severed the nerves, which connect the kidneys to the brain and carry signals to control blood pressure.

Doctors say the operation, which costs just 6,000 pounds, could offer a lasting solution for tens of thousands of British patients whose high blood pressure cannot be controlled by conventional drugs. Although people who undergo the procedure still have to take medication to keep their condition in check, it brings about a drop in blood pressure, which drugs alone have failed to provide.

Further trials will establish whether the technique, known as renal denervation, could also help patients whose bodies will not tolerate conventional blood pressure drugs.

In a study, which involved more than 100 patients across 11 countries, researchers found that the 20 per cent reduction in patients' blood pressure was still maintained a year and a half after the procedure, with no major side effects reported.

"We are encouraged to see that renal denervation shows substantial and sustained blood pressure reduction in treatment resistant patients," the Telegraph quoted Dr Murray Esler of Saarland University Hospital in Germany as saying.

"We know the renal nerves play a crucial role in blood pressure elevation and this study shows those nerves can be targeted with renal denervation without major side effects," Dr Esler added.

The new procedure, first trialled at Barts and the London NHS trust in 2009, involves severing malfunctioning nerves around the kidneys.

The nerves send signals to the brain that tell it that blood pressure is too low, causing the brain to increase it to dangerously high levels.

Doctors correct the fault by threading a wire through the renal artery until it reaches the kidneys, where it lets off a burst of heat to burn the nerves and disable them.

Although the operation is moderately painful, it does not require a general anaesthetic and patients can generally leave hospital on the same day.

Charities have so far funded a small number of procedures for patients in severe need, but doctors involved in the trial said they will lobby NHS commissioning boards to make it available to a limited number of treatment-resistant patients next year.

Findings from the study were presented at the European Society of Cardiology congress in Munich.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health/Simple-keyhole-surgery-can-halve-heart-attack-risk/articleshow/15816677.cms>

31. What is a Stroke? What Causes a Stroke?

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Stroke

A stroke is a condition where a blood clot or ruptured artery or blood vessel interrupts blood flow to an area of the brain.

A **stroke** is a condition where a blood clot or ruptured artery or blood vessel interrupts blood flow to an area of the brain. A lack of oxygen and glucose (sugar) flowing to the brain leads to the death of brain cells and brain damage, often resulting in impairment in speech, movement, and memory.

The two main types of stroke include **ischemic stroke** and **hemorrhagic stroke**. Ischemic stroke accounts for about 75% of all strokes and occurs when a blood clot, or thrombus, forms that blocks blood flow to part of the brain. If a blood clot forms somewhere in the body and breaks off to become free-floating, it is called an embolus. This wandering clot may be carried through the bloodstream to the brain where it can cause ischemic stroke. A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel on the brain's surface ruptures and fills the space between the brain and skull with blood (subarachnoid hemorrhage) or when a defective artery in the brain bursts and fills the surrounding tissue with blood (cerebral hemorrhage). Both result in a lack of blood flow to the brain and a buildup of blood that puts

too much pressure on the brain.

The outcome after a stroke depends on where the stroke occurs and how much of the brain is affected. Smaller strokes may result in minor problems, such as weakness in an arm or leg. Larger strokes may lead to paralysis or death. Many stroke patients are left with weakness on one side of the body, difficulty speaking, [incontinence](#), and bladder problems.

Who gets stroke?

Anyone can suffer from stroke. Although many risk factors for stroke are out of our control, several can be kept in line through proper [nutrition](#) and medical care. Risk factors for stroke include the following:

- Over age 55
- Male
- African American, Hispanic or Asian/Pacific Islander
- A family history of stroke
- [High blood pressure](#)
- High [cholesterol](#)
- Smoking cigarettes
- [Diabetes](#)
- [Obesity](#) and overweight
- Cardiovascular disease
- A previous stroke or [transient ischemic attack](#) (TIA)
- High levels of homocysteine (an amino acid in blood)
- [Birth control](#) use or other hormone therapy
- Cocaine use
- Heavy use of alcohol

What causes stroke?

Ischemic strokes are ultimately caused by a thrombus or embolus that blocks blood flow to the brain. Blood clots (thrombus clots) usually occur in areas of the arteries that have been damaged by [atherosclerosis](#) from a buildup of plaques. Embolus type blood clots are often caused by [atrial fibrillation](#) - an irregular pattern of heart beat that leads to blood clot formation and poor blood flow.

Hemorrhage strokes can be caused by uncontrolled high blood pressure, a head injury, or [aneurysms](#). High blood pressure is the most common cause of cerebral hemorrhage, as it causes small arteries inside the brain to burst. This deprives brain cells of blood and dangerously increases pressure on the brain.

Aneurysms - abnormal blood-filled pouches that balloon out from weak spots in the wall of an artery - are the most common cause of subarachnoid hemorrhage. If an aneurysm ruptures, blood spills into the space between the surfaces of the brain and skull, and blood vessels in the brain may spasm. Aneurysms are often caused or made worse by high blood pressure.

[A study found](#) that a Single Gene Defect Can Lead To Stroke and Deadly Diseases of the Aorta and Coronary Arteries.

A less common form of hemorrhage stroke is when an arteriovenous malformation (AVM) ruptures. AVM is an abnormal tangle of thin-walled blood vessels that is present at birth.

[A study found](#) that [migraines](#) increase stroke risk during pregnancy.

What are the symptoms of stroke?

Within a few minutes of having a stroke, brain cells begin to die and symptoms can become present. It is important to recognize symptoms, as prompt treatment is crucial to recovery. Common symptoms include:

- Dizziness, trouble walking, loss of balance and coordination
- Speech problems
- Numbness, weakness, or paralysis on one side of the body
- Blurred, blackened, or [double vision](#)
- Sudden severe [headache](#)

Smaller strokes (or silent strokes), however, may not cause any symptoms, but can still damage brain tissue.

A possible sign that a stroke is about to occur is called a transient ischemic attack (TIA) - a temporary interruption in blood flow to part of the brain. Symptoms of TIA are similar to stroke but last for a shorter time period and do not leave noticeable permanent damage.

[A study found](#) that women are more likely to experience non-traditional stroke symptoms.

How is stroke diagnosed?

A stroke is a medical emergency, and anyone suspected of having a stroke should be taken to a hospital immediately so that tests can be run and the correct treatment can be provided as quickly as possible.

Physicians have several tools available to screen for stroke risk and diagnose an active stroke. These include:

- Physical assessment - blood pressure tests and blood tests to see cholesterol levels, blood sugar levels, and amino acid levels
- [Ultrasound](#) - a wand waved over the carotid arteries in the neck can provide a picture that indicates any narrowing or clotting
- Arteriography - a catheter is inserted into the arteries to inject a dye that can be picked up by X-rays
- Computerized tomography (CT) scan - a scanning device that creates a 3-D image that can show aneurysms, bleeding, or abnormal vessels within the brain
- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) - a magnetic field generates a 3-D view of the brain to see tissue damaged by stroke
- CT and MRI with angiography - scans that are aided by a dye that is injected into the blood vessels in order to provide clearer and more detailed images
- Echocardiography - an ultrasound that makes images of the heart to check for embolus

How is stroke treated?

The primary goal in treating ischemic stroke is to restore blood flow to the brain. This will be attempted using blood clot-busting drugs such as [aspirin](#), heparin, or tissue plasminogen activators that must be administered within three hours of the stroke. In addition, surgical procedures may be performed that can open up or widen arteries. These include carotid endarterectomy (removal of plaque and widening of the carotid artery) and angioplasty (a balloon that widens the carotid artery and is held open with a metallic mesh tube called a stent).

[A study found](#) that cholesterol lowering drugs can prevent stroke recurrence.

Hemorrhagic stroke is treated differently than ischemic stroke. Surgical methods used to treat this stroke variant include aneurysm clipping, aneurysm embolisation, and arteriovenous malformation (AVM) removal. Aneurysm clipping consists of a small clamp placed at the base of the aneurysm that isolates it from the circulation of its attached artery and keeps the aneurysm from bursting or re-bleeding. Aneurysm embolisation (coiling) uses a catheter inserted into the aneurysm to deposit a tiny coil that fills the aneurysm, causing clotting and sealing off the aneurysm from arteries. AVM removal is a surgical procedure to remove usually smaller AVMs or AMVs that are in more accessible portions of the brain in order to eliminate the risk of rupture.

US researchers found that patients who had experienced strokes as long as six months earlier were able to regain brain function through the help of a [novel robotic device that they squeezed with their hand](#).

Most stroke victims will require rehabilitation after the event. A person's condition is generally dependent on the area of the brain and the amount of tissue that was damaged. It is common for the rehabilitation process to include speech therapy, occupational therapy, [physical therapy](#), and family education.

[A study carried out by researchers at the University of Illinois, Chicago](#) found that Tai Chi helped stroke victims regain balance.

[A new study has found](#) that the short window of time to treat stroke patients can be expanded.

[A stroke patient was intravenously injected with his own bone marrow stem cells](#) as part of a research trial at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston.

How can stroke be prevented?

One way to prevent a stroke is to notice a **transient ischemic attack (TIA)** - or **mini stroke** - that provides symptoms similar to stroke. Knowing the symptoms of stroke can lead to earlier treatment and better recovery.

Much of stroke prevention is based on living a healthy lifestyle. This includes:

- Knowing and controlling blood pressure
- Finding out if you have atrial fibrillation
- Not smoking
- Lowering cholesterol, sodium, and fat intake
- Following a healthy diet
- Drinking alcohol only in moderation
- Treating diabetes properly
- Exercising regularly. Moderate aerobic fitness can reduce stroke risk, [a study found](#).
- Managing [stress](#)
- Not using drugs
- [A study found that](#) drinking three cups of tea per day reduces the risk of stroke
- Taking preventive medications such as anti-platelet and anticoagulant drugs to prevent blood clots
- [Cholesterol lowering drugs can prevent stroke recurrence](#)

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<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/7624.php>

32. High Blood Pressure: What is High Blood Pressure?

The writer has posted comments on this article Trina Remedios, Health Me Up | Aug 4, 2012

Stress, erratic meals, over-consumption of 'outside food,' and unhealthy social commitments can all contribute to high blood pressure.

While, globally, the number of high blood pressure (HBP) cases has fallen, in India this number is on a steady incline. A recent study revealed that, till the end of 2008, 139 million Indians suffered from HBP. Did you know this staggering number is also susceptible to stroke, heart and kidney failure? To help you understand this condition better, we collate some interesting facts about high blood pressure and its prevention.

What is high blood pressure?

Are you tired, dizzy and often faint? Those are a few signs that are linked to HBP. But it is not the case with everyone; HBP is not easily diagnosed only through a check up.

Scientifically HBP is defined as follows: "Hypertension (HTN) or high blood pressure, sometimes called arterial hypertension, is a chronic medical condition in which the blood pressure in the arteries is elevated. This requires the heart to work harder than normal to circulate blood through the blood vessels."

What is the normal blood pressure range?

There are two parts in monitoring and measuring your blood pressure:

Systolic: The blood pressure while your heart is beating.

Diastolic: The blood pressure when your heart is at rest.

On the blood pressure monitor, systolic is written on top and diastolic below it. But what is the average normal blood pressure? Systolic should be below 120 and diastolic should be below 80.

High blood pressure and serious health problems:

Hypertension is only a precursor to other major and deadly health problems. A slight increase in blood pressure may potentially shorten your life. Most of us may not be aware but HBP shouldn't be taken lightly. It can catapult into larger health issues like kidney failure, stroke, heart failure and heart attacks. We take a closer look at these health problems and how high blood pressure is linked to them.

High blood pressure and kidney problems

The function of the kidney is to filter and separate the good and the bad. Your kidney also has arteries. When blood is pumped uncontrollably through these arteries for a long period of time, these arteries weaken and harden. Hence, they cannot provide sufficient blood to the kidney, damaging the kidney.

An interesting fact: Kidney produces a hormone that regulates blood pressure, this process fails when the kidney is damaged.

High blood pressure and stroke

You suffer a stroke when your arteries are clogged (ischemic strokes) or they burst (hemorrhagic strokes). Clogged arteries will reduce oxygen supply in the body causing a stroke which in turn causes paralysis, speech impairment and affects vision and memory. If you have HBP it will weaken your arteries; you may suffer a brain stroke if the arteries are weak in the brain.

Interesting fact: Ischemic strokes account for 87 percent of all stroke cases.

High blood pressure and heart failure

When blood is pumped in more than regulated amounts, your arteries face the brunt of this lifestyle disease. That's not all; your heart also works harder, which causes the blood to thicken and reduces the flow of blood in the body.

Some of the symptoms of high blood pressure and heart failure: A sense of tiredness, fatigue, breathlessness, swollen ankles, feet and legs. Immediate treatment is necessary.

High blood pressure and heart attack

HBP is closely related to atherosclerosis, a coronary heart disease. The artery walls are blocked and harden with fatty substances making it difficult for the blood to flow. When you have HBP, the arteries face a lot more pressure when the blood is pumped. This makes the arteries weak resulting in lack of oxygen supply to the brain and the rest of the body, over time. Hence HBP could increase your chances of suffering from a heart attack.

How to prevent high blood pressure or hypertension

Hypertension is a controllable disease. You can avert and prevent HBP and hypertension if you incorporate a healthy diet along with exercise and medication.

Population-wide decrease in Blood Pressure can prevent 1,51,000 stroke and 1,53,000 coronary heart disease deaths in India each year.

95% of patients with high blood pressure have 'Primary Hypertension' that is - hypertension without any obvious medical cause. Many contributing factors may be present in these patients like obesity, alcohol or tobacco intake, high salt intake, low potassium or calcium intake, psychosocial stress, sedentary lifestyle, socioeconomic status or genetic factors.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health/High-blood-pressure-What-is-high-blood-pressure/articleshow/15160164.cms>