Mental health

**How pandemic restrictions impacted mental health in countries: Lancet**
(The Tribune: 20220428)

While countries prioritised stricter policies that attempted to control Covid-19 transmission, restrictions on daily routine life with lockdowns had a significant impact on mental health during the pandemic, according to a study published in The Lancet Public Health.

An international research team, led by Simon Fraser University in Canada conducted a global study on countries' responses to the pandemic. They found there have been worse mental health trajectories in countries that attempted to control Covid-19 transmission with stricter public health restrictions, such as Canada, than those which tried to suppress or eliminate Covid-19 transmission.

The survey data was collected from 15 countries between April 2020 and June 2021. Countries were grouped into two categories: those that sought to eliminate Covid-19 transmission and those that aimed to mitigate or reduce the spread of the virus within the country.

Eliminator countries include Australia, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea. Mitigator countries include Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.
Eliminator countries such as South Korea and Japan implemented early and targeted actions, such as international travel restrictions, which resulted in lower levels of Covid-19 infections, fewer deaths and less negative mental health impacts compared to mitigator countries.

Mitigator countries such as Canada, France and the UK were less strict about travel and relied more on physical distance, gathering restrictions and stay-at-home requirements.

These measures restricted social connections and were associated with greater psychological distress, lower life evaluations and a lower opinion of the government compared to people living in eliminator countries.

"Governmental responses to the Covid-19 pandemic have been widely debated," said Lara Aknin, psychology associate professor at the varsity.

"At first sight, it may seem that eliminator countries implemented much harsher strategies than other countries because of their widely reported international travel bans. But, in reality, people within these borders enjoyed more freedom and less restrictive domestic containment measures overall than citizens in mitigator countries," she added.

The researchers said that effective policies to contain the pandemic must be accompanied by strategies and resources to address the adverse impacts on mental health.

For future pandemics, the researchers suggest governments could prioritise policies that reduce virus transmission but impose fewer restrictions on daily life, such as restricting domestic travel instead of restricting gatherings.

They suggest an elimination strategy, with timely use of testing and contact tracing could minimise deaths without requiring more restrictive policy measures to contain viral spread.

Ayushman Bharat Block Health Melas

Over 6 lakh diabetes screenings in a week at Ayushman Bharat Block Health Melas
More than 27.31 lakh footfall was recorded in 3,204 block health melas across 33 states and UTs in a week, the Union Health Ministry said
Over 6 lakh diabetes screenings in a week at Ayushman Bharat Block Health Melas
Photo for representational purpose only. (The Tribune: 20220428)
A total 6.75 lakh screenings for hypertension, 6.11 lakh for diabetes, 2.05 lakh cataract screenings and over 1.76 lakh teleconsultations have been done at Ayushman Bharat block-level health melas in a week, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

More than 27.31 lakh footfall was recorded in 3,204 block health melas across 33 states and UTs in a week, it said.

Over 3.66 lakh ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) IDs were created across India, with maximum of 56,321 in Maharashtra and more than 1.17 lakh Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (PMJAY) golden cards were created across India, mostly in Karnataka (22,091) About 1,009 Block Health Melas had blood donation camps and 519 had organ donation registration, the ministry said in a statement.

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with states and Union Territories is celebrating the 4th Anniversary of Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav from April 16 to 22.
The Block Health Melas commenced on April 18 in 33 states and UTs across India. These health melas are serving as platforms to attract thousands of people to avail quality healthcare services along with essential medicines and diagnostic services, the statement noted.

They are a medium of providing health education, information on wellness lifestyle along with other healthcare services for early detection and treatment of diseases. The melas will continue till the end of April, it said.

The Union Health Minister, Health Minister of states and UTs, MPs, MLAs, senior officials of the Union Health Ministry, Principal Health secretaries/ Health secretaries of States/UTs, senior officials of the state Health department, representatives and local dignitaries are also visiting the AB-HWCs and creating awareness among the public about the importance of AB-HWCs in providing affordable and accessible healthcare.

**variants of coronavirus**

**Very few recombinant variants of coronavirus have been found in India: INSACOG**

Genomics consortia say none of recombinant variants showed either increased transmission or was associated with severe disease or hospitalisation (The Tribune: 20220428)

Based on genome-sequencing analysis, the Indian SARS-COV-2 Genomics Consortia (INSACOG) has said very few recombinant variants of the coronavirus have been found in the country and none of those has shown either increased transmission, locally or otherwise, nor were they associated with severe disease or hospitalisation.

INSACOG, in its weekly bulletin of April 11 that was released on Wednesday, said the incidences of suspected recombinants and the possible public health relevance are being closely monitored.

It said a total of 2,40,570 samples have been sequenced till now.
“Based on genome sequencing analysis, very few recombinant variants have been discovered in India. So far, none showed either increased transmission (locally or otherwise) or was associated with severe disease or hospitalisation,” it said.

On the global scenario, the INSACOG said two recombinant variants—XD and XE—are being closely monitored worldwide. XD, which has an Omicron S gene incorporated into a Delta genome, is found primarily in France.

“XE is a BA.1/BA.2 recombinant, with the majority of the genome including the S gene belonging to BA.2. XE shows slightly higher transmission rate. XE also shows a higher growth rate above that of BA.2; however, this finding requires further confirmation,” the INSACOG said.

At the prime minister’s meeting with chief ministers, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said one case of XK/XM was found in Maharashtra, one case of XJ was detected in Rajasthan and a case each of the XJ and XE recombinant versions of Omicron has been found in the country.

COVID CHALLENGE

COVID CHALLENGE NOT OVER YET, PRIORITY TO JAB ALL: MODI TO CMS (Hindustan Times: 20220428)

https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=284b5191978&imageview=0

While India has managed the coronavirus pandemic well so far, a surge in cases in some states recently has manifested the need to stay alert and ensure all eligible persons are vaccinated, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday.

At a virtual meeting with chief ministers to review the Covid-19 situation across the country, Modi said the Centre’s priority is also to vaccinate all eligible children at the earliest with special campaigns needed in schools. “It is clear that the Covid challenge is not fully over yet...India has been able to deal with the situation better than many countries. Still, in the last two weeks, increasing cases in some of the states show that we need to stay alert,” Modi said.

Miracle tea’

Try this ‘miracle tea’ to keep summer headache, bloating, uneasiness, abdominal pain and heaviness at bay (The Indian Express:20220428)
"Works wonderfully for people suffering from migraine, high cholesterol, diabetes, thyroid, acidity, gastric trouble, hormone imbalances, constipation,” said Ayurvedic expert Dr Dixa Bhavsar on Instagram.


Summer tea recipe
Try this refreshing and healthy tea today! (Source: Pixabay)
Summer is upon us, in all its glory (read: sweltering heat)! It goes without saying that keeping yourself hydrated, at all times, is an absolute must to prevent issues such as bloating, nausea, headache, abdominal pain, and a general sense of uneasiness and heaviness.

While water should be your go-to drink this season, you can also try a host of infused drinks to keep dehydration at bay and reap the benefits of some healthy ingredients alongside. If you are looking for one such healthy drink, why not try the ‘miracle tea’.

ALSO READ |Why it is important to eat your food slowly, and how you can do that
According to Ayurvedic expert Dr Dixa Bhavsar, this tea can “relieve all your health issues such as summer headache, bloating, abdominal pain, heaviness, uneasiness, and provides hydration.”

Made using three summer essentials – mint, cumin and coriander – it can be consumed by everyone in the family, in every season, the expert shared. “Works wonderfully for people suffering from migraine, high cholesterol, diabetes, thyroid, acidity, gastric trouble, hormone imbalances, constipation, etc.”

Method

*Take a glass of water in a vessel and start boiling it.
*Add 5-7 mint leaves, 1 tsp of cumin (jeera) and 1 tbsp of coriander seeds to it, and boil the mixture for five minutes.
*Strain the tea and sip on it while it is lukewarm.

ALSO READ |Vegan diet: Healthy plant-based protein sources you can try
Sharing the benefits of mint, Dr Bhavsar said, it “smells like heaven and tastes delicious. It helps with cold/cough, acidity, gas, bloating, indigestion, headache, detox, acne, sinusitis, constipation and more.”

“Cumin again is another spice I love. Everything from its smell and taste to its benefits is outstanding. It is hot in potency, improves taste, stimulates the digestive fire and promotes digestion. It reduces kapha and Vata,” she added.

According to her, coriander is healthy as it is “easy to digest, has madhura vipaka ad balances all three doshas. It can be consumed in all seasons, especially during summers”.

Paracetamol: Myths vs facts
Paracetamol can help relieve symptoms like high fever, moderate body pain, cold and flu (The Indian Express: 20220428)


Paracetamol, what is paracetamol, how important is paracetamol, what does paracetamol do, myths about paracetamol, facts about paracetamol, health, indian express news

The efficacy of this paracetamol begins within 30 minutes after the consumption, and it usually lasts for 4-6 hours in the body. (Photo: Getty/Thinkstock)

Paracetamol is a common medicine found in every household. It is also known as acetaminophen, a painkiller and fever reducer. The reason why people consume it is because it helps with conditions like fever, headache, muscles ache, backache.

According to Dr P S Pradeep Kumar, M.S., D.L.O., D.N.B., MNAMS, despite its usage, millions of people are still not aware of its treatment and how it really works. He said that in the pandemic, they preferred taking paracetamol to manage symptoms like fever, headache, or body aches.

ALSO READ | Why Paracetamol is not recommended for teenagers post Covid vaccination

“Not only this, even the World Health Organization recommended its intake as it has helped in relieving the patient’s symptoms like high fever, moderate body pain, cold and flu,” the doctor stated, adding that many people in India suffer from diabetes, hypertension or both, and study suggests they are “advised to consume paracetamol as pain reliever due to its mild properties and superior safety profile”.

But, it is also true that today, people trust the internet for information, and given the speed and time with which information is uploaded, it creates a lot of misconceptions, the doctor stated.

He listed some myths and facts about paracetamol that people ought to know.

Myth – Paracetamol stays in the body for 24 hours.
Fact – The efficacy of this paracetamol begins within 30 minutes after the consumption, and it usually lasts for 4-6 hours in the body.

Myth – Paracetamol is known to have long term side effects and can lead to health issues.
Fact – Paracetamol is known to be used as a ‘first line’ medication for mild and moderate pain and it has less side effects known when compared to any other painkillers.

ALSO READ | World Immunization Week 2022: Five important things to know about vaccines

Myth – I can’t take paracetamol because I have diabetes and high blood pressure.
Fact – Paracetamol is the only painkiller known to have less drug interactions and can be taken by patients suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure.

“Optizorb technology helps in increasing the speed of disintegrating the tablet into smaller molecules to start the process of pain relief. It is suitable for a large number of people and has
a better safety profile. Due to Optizorb technology paracetamol starts releasing in 5 minutes. To ensure a safer health it is always recommended to take doctor’s advice before consuming. One should always follow the directions and not overdose,” the doctor concluded.

Health problems

Effective ways to manage health problems in children during summer

Intense humidity coupled with heat can make matters worse, said Dr Suresh Birajdar, neonatologist and paediatrician(The Indian Express:20220428)


GettyImages-children-COVID19-symptoms_1200
Read on to know more summer related health issues in children (Source: Getty Images/Indian Express)

Summer can be worrisome not only for adults but also for children. There are numerous health problems that children can encounter during the hot and humid season, and these include certain allergies and infections.

Intense humidity coupled with heat can make matters worse, said Dr Suresh Birajdar, neonatologist and paediatrician, Motherhood Hospital, Kharghar. He lists some signs and conditions that parents need to be aware of.

Heatstroke (Hyperthermia)

Caused owing to prolonged exposure to high temperatures, it presents symptoms like exhaustion, headaches, dizziness, and weakness. To tackle hyperthermia, cool down the child’s body with the help of water, or ice packs. When working/playing outdoors, use a hat or cap. Happens due to the consumption of contaminated food or water. The warm and humid weather leads to the growth of bacteria which can contaminate food. The symptoms include stomach pain, nausea, diarrhoea, or vomiting. So, avoid eating roadside food, and also stale or uncooked food.

Dehydration

During summer, children tend to lose a lot of water and salts in the form of sweat. This needs to be replenished by staying hydrated. Coconut water, buttermilk, and lemon water are some good options to keep children hydrated during summer.

summers Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids even if they are not thirsty. Water is best. (Source: Pexels)
Sunburn

Too much exposure to the sun can damage the child’s skin. It causes reddening, inflammation, and, blistering and also peeling. Do not send your children out in the sun without applying sunscreen. Moreover, children should avoid going out between 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Rashes

Rashes, blisters, infections, and allergies are commonly seen in children. Eczema is a skin disease that gets aggravated during summer, owing to sweat, exposure to the sun, and increased secretion of oil. Your child may suffer from a skin rash as a result. Try to consult a doctor for an appropriate line of treatment.

To manage skin irritation, parents can apply a cold compress to the affected area. Make the kids wear comfortable and loose-fitting cotton clothes during summers. Avoid using any skin products without consulting the doctor.

ALSO READ | World Health Day 2022: Simple ways to beat the summer heat and its ill effects

Waterborne diseases

Contaminated water can lead to typhoid, diarrhoea, cholera, jaundice, and dysentery in children. Parents must carry water bottles while travelling with kids.

Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

Is an inflammation of the conjunctiva. It can lead to symptoms such as redness, itching, and eye inflammation. Take appropriate care of the child’s eyes frequently. Make sure the child doesn’t touch the eyes and takes medication.

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

It is an infection in any part of your urinary system. ie., the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra. Cases of UTIs in children increase during summer due to insufficient water intake. Maintain good personal hygiene and drink enough water.

Malaria

Time to tackle malaria: From grassroots action to holistic policy interventions and effective delivery of services

For a malaria-free India, future elimination roadmaps will also need to factor in contemporary challenges, including climate change and rapid urbanisation. (The Indian Express:20220428)

https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/malaria-grassroots-holistic-policy-intervention-7889261/
Malaria deaths increased by 12 per cent globally in 2020, in comparison to 2019, to an estimated 6,27,000. (Representational image)
Written by Prof N K Ganguly

While the world deliberates the best way out of the present pandemic, this is also an opportune time to further conversations on another deadly vector-borne disease: malaria. The World Malaria Report 2021 states that, globally, there were an estimated 241 million cases in 2020, increasing from 227 million in 2019. Malaria deaths increased by 12 per cent globally in 2020, in comparison to 2019, to an estimated 6,27,000. For India, the numbers are grim. In 2020, the South-East Asia Region (SEAR) had 5 million estimated cases. Three countries accounted for 99.7 per cent of the estimated cases in the region, with India being the largest contributor (82.5 per cent). India also accounted for 82 per cent of all malaria deaths in the SEAR.

Evidently, we need to further refine our health interventions to defeat malaria. At the East Asia Summit in 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi committed India to eliminating malaria by 2030. Following the PM’s call to action, the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) was launched in 2016 and the National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination was launched as well (2017-22). The results were almost immediate—India reduced its malaria cases by nearly 69 per cent, according to government data. India was also the only high-endemic nation to see a decrease of 17.6 per cent in 2019 compared to 2018. Further, compared to the same time last year, the overall number of malaria cases recorded in 2020 was 1,57,284 (as compared to the number of cases in 2019 being 2,86,091), which is a year-on-year decrease of approximately 45 per cent. However, the pandemic disrupted health programmes across the country and the reduction in malaria cases in 2020 is potentially correlated with the under-reporting of cases in this period.

Don’t miss |Leveraging newer technologies aided by a surveillance system revamp core to malaria elimination now, says WHO’s Dr Soumya Swaminathan

Several interventions are identified to prevent and control malaria. For instance, insecticide-treated bed nets (ITNs) and long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) are two effective ways to prevent malaria. However, the distribution of ITNs has been a challenge. We delivered just 50 per cent of the nets planned for distribution in 2020. Drug resistance, too, is a challenge: the development of antimalarial drug resistance and insecticide resistance has been noticed in some parts of the country, as has been the development of malaria multi-drug resistance including ACT resistance in neighbouring countries.It will be useful to re-evaluate some other key diagnostic interventions to see how efficacious they are and the potential for further scale-ups in India as necessary. To this end, mention must be made of rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs), which assist in the diagnosis of malaria by detecting evidence of malaria parasites (antigens) in human blood. As per the latest World Malaria Report, India reported 20 million RDT distributions in 2020. There is also the ICT Malaria Combo Cassette Test, which has been seen as a useful support tool to diagnose malaria in resource-poor health care settings, where quality microscopy diagnosis is either not present or not guaranteed.

Within the larger narrative of malaria in India, there are some dimensions which need focus. Malaria in pregnancy (MiP) is a major complication for the mother, the foetus, and the newborn. Efforts should be made to ensure more scholarship of MiP cases in India, and mitigation mechanisms should be developed accordingly. Some studies have indicated a high overall burden already, in the range of 10 per cent to 30 per cent and this needs increased attention. We need to be cognisant of certain high transmission areas as well when counteracting malaria such as tribal zones. India’s National Framework for Malaria Elimination (2016-2030)
does have a targeted Tribal Malaria Action Plan (TMAP) that strives for malaria prevention and control activities in tribal and ethnic population groups spread across different states and Union Territories. We must ensure such initiatives reach fruition. Hilly, forested, desert, and conflict-prone geographies also need a customised action plan and policies need to be refined keeping these considerations in mind.

Future elimination roadmaps will need to factor in contemporary challenges. Climate change and rapid urbanisation are high risk-factors for malaria. As temperatures rise globally, mosquitoes will spread to higher altitudes increasing disease spread. In fact, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its 6th assessment report, indicated a distribution shift in diseases like malaria to higher altitudes including potential outbreaks in the Himalayan region.

Even though the landscape appears challenging, there already exists the right political will and the policy armature needed to effect change. We just need to address some fundamentals of public health better: levelling ditches, designing better manholes and developing biopesticides can help to prevent malaria. Furthermore, as the monsoon approaches, we need targeted screening camps in high-burden states/districts, periodic sanitation exercises, vector control, and regular fogging. We must certainly ensure the procurement and distribution of LLINs across susceptible geographies. The role of the community becomes critical here. Just as India leveraged the strength of community action to defeat polio, it can deploy a similar strategy for malaria too. At the last mile, community leaders and influential voices can ensure better disease awareness and the enforcement of preventive measures like LLINs and sanitation drives.

Grassroots action is critical to combat a disease like malaria. Such endeavours in addition to holistic policy interventions and effective delivery of services would be vital in helping us achieve our goal of a malaria-free India by 2030.

**Blood sugar**

**Study flags poor control of blood sugar in Indians (The Hindu: 20220428)**


ICMR-INDIAB study across 27 States stressed the need to have better control over various health parameters

Only over 7% of over 5,297 individuals in India with diabetes were able to achieve their blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol targets, according to a recent paper published in the Lancet- Diabetes and Endocrinology.
Acute hepatitis cases

WHO says at least one child has died after increase of acute hepatitis cases in children(The Hindu:20220428)


The WHO said a common cold virus known as an adenovirus had been detected in at least 74 cases
The World Health Organization said on Saturday that at least one child death had been reported following an increase of acute hepatitis of unknown origin in children, and that at least 169 cases had been reported in children in 12 countries.

The WHO issued the figures as health authorities around the world investigate a mysterious increase in severe cases of hepatitis - inflammation of the liver

Strong mind for a strong life

Strong mind for a strong life (The Hindu:20220428)


April books on health exhort readers to develop a strong mind and know their potential to build a disease-free life for themselves
Active COVID-19 cases in country rise to 14,241 (The Hindu: 20220428)


The death toll climbed to 5,22,116 with 54 fresh fatalities
With 2,451 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, India's total tally of COVID-19 cases rose to 4,30,52,425, while the active cases increased to 14,241, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday.

The death toll climbed to 5,22,116 with 54 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8.00 am. stated.

Hepatitis (Dainik Bhasker: 20220428)

https://epaper.bhaskar.com/detail/1260312/37005751838/mpec/28042022/194/image/
Infection (Dainik Bhasker :20220428)

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