

## News and Views

### **Fathers are One of the Best, Yet Most Underutilized Child Development Resources, Says UNICEF**

To mark Father's Day this month, UNICEF has launched a new parenting site as part of its 'Super Dads' campaign recognizing father's role in their children's early development. UNICEF is calling for more support for fathers globally, including for policies that give parents the time and resources they need to spend quality time with their children. The online site will bring together fathers from across the world to share their parenting tips, their struggles, their needs and their successes. It will also feature 'mini parenting master classes', the first of which features UNICEF Global Chief of Early Childhood Development Dr Pia Britto explaining to Sesame Street's Grover the importance of protection, stimulation and good nutrition for healthy brain development.

The 'Super Dads' campaign is intended to remind parents everywhere that when fathers nurture their young ones in their earliest years of life - by providing love and protection, playing with them and supporting their nutrition - their children will learn better, have less behavioral issues and become healthier, happier human beings.

"More than just a second parent or an extra set of hands, fathers are one of the best child development resources we have, and if we are going to give children the best start in life, we all need to fully recognize and utilize this role," said UNICEF Chief of Early Childhood Development Dr Pia Britto... (UNICEF, June 7, 2018)

### **Tonsillectomy During Childhood Increases Long-term Risk of Respiratory Diseases**

Removal of adenoids and tonsils in childhood is associated with increased long-term risk of respiratory, allergic and infectious diseases, according to a study of almost 1.2 million children published online June 7, 2018 in *JAMA Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery*.

### **US FDA Approves Venetoclax for CLL/SLL Patients with/without 17p Deletion**

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved venetoclax for patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) or small lymphocytic lymphoma (SLL), with or without 17p deletion, who have received at least one prior therapy.

### **Antiplatelet Therapy can be Restarted After Spontaneous ICH**

A retrospective analysis first published May 30, 2018, in the journal *Neurology* concluded that restarting antiplatelet therapy in patients with spontaneous mild-to-moderate intracerebral hemorrhage is not associated with worse functional outcomes or health-related quality-of-life at 90 days.

### **Elobixibat Safe and Effective for Treatment of Chronic Constipation**

Results of a phase III trial reported online May 24, 2018 in *The Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology* demonstrate the safety and effectiveness of elobixibat in chronic constipation. Elobixibat is a minimally absorbed inhibitor of ileal bile acid transporter.

### **Insomnia Increases Risk of Heart Disease**

Insomnia or poor sleep with polysomnography-short sleep was associated with a 29% higher risk of incident cardiovascular disease, says a study published in the June 2018 issue of the journal *Sleep*.

### **At One-month Mark in Ebola Outbreak, the Focus Shifts to Remote Areas**

One month into the response to an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the focus has moved from urban areas to some of the most remote places on earth. The shift comes after a series of unprecedented actions that have led to cautious optimism about the effectiveness of the response.

The first phase of the response focused on protecting the town of Bikoro and the city of Mbandaka from a potentially exponential increase in cases, which could have threatened major cities in the country as well as its neighbours along the river.

"The next phase is all about expeditionary surveillance: teams of epidemiologists fanning out over hundreds of kilometers by motorcycles through the remote rainforests," said Dr Peter Salama, Deputy Director-General of Emergency Preparedness and Response at WHO, who returned from his second mission to the country on 8 June. "They are working to find each case quickly, tracking the contacts and engaging the communities, including the indigenous population

in and around the villages of Itipo and Iboko. We need to pursue the virus wherever it heads and remain agile, responsive and super focused.”

As the response in-country continues, the World Health Organization (WHO) is supporting 9 countries bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo to scale up their national emergency preparedness and response capacities. A plan finalized on 7 June outlines how these countries can review their readiness to respond, while identifying any gaps in their capabilities. WHO is working closely with the Ministries of Health and wider government stakeholders, and partners in these countries to put these measures in place.

- On 9 May, the day after country declared an outbreak of Ebola virus disease in Bikoro, the first WHO and Ministry of Health Response Team arrived in the provincial capital Mbandaka to begin setting up the specialized cold chain needed to store a vaccine.
- By 11 May, teams had started to trace contacts of all active cases and WHO partners were setting up treatment centers in Bikoro. The next day, an air bridge was established to Bikoro and a mobile lab deployed to speed up testing for infection.
- And then, just 6 days after the alert, the first batch of more than 4,000 doses of vaccine was on its way from Geneva to Kinshasa. This marked the first time vaccines were available so early in a response.
- Ring vaccination of contacts began on 21 May.
- On 4 June, an Ethics Committee in the country approved the use of 5 investigational therapeutics under the framework of compassionate use, following recommendations from a group of experts convened by WHO. This is the first time such treatments were available in the midst of a response.

(WHO, June 10, 2018)

### **Feeling of Loneliness, and not Living Alone, is Bad for the Heart**

Feeling lonely rather than living alone is bad for the heart and a strong predictor of premature death, according to a study presented June 9, 2018 at EuroHeartCare 2018, the European Society of Cardiology’s annual nursing congress. Feeling lonely was associated with poor outcomes in all patients regardless of their type of heart disease, and even after adjusting for age, level of education, other diseases, body mass index, smoking, and alcohol intake.

### **US FDA Approves Pegfilgrastim Biosimilar for Cancer Infection Risk**

The US FDA has approved the first biosimilar to pegfilgrastim (Neulasta, Amgen) - pegfilgrastim-jmdb - a granulocyte colony-stimulating factor used to reduce infection risk in patients with nonmyeloid cancer who are receiving myelosuppressive chemotherapy that has a clinically significant incidence of febrile neutropenia.

### **Breastfeeding Modifies Gut Microbiome to Prevent Overweight**

New data from the Canadian Healthy Infant Longitudinal Development (CHILD) study published online June 4 in *JAMA Pediatrics* show that breastfeeding may protect infants from becoming overweight in the first year of life by altering the gut microbiome, while formula feeding may stimulate changes in gut microbiota that are associated with overweight.

### **Progressive Loss of Visual Field Impairs Driving Skills in Glaucoma Patients**

With progressive loss of visual field, patients with glaucoma lose the ability to negotiate curves and show greater mean reaction time on the divided-attention task, suggests a study presented May 2, 2018 at ARVO 2018, the annual meeting of The Association for research in Vision and Ophthalmology, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

### **Kitchen Towels are a Source of Bacteria that may Cause Food Poisoning**

A study from Mauritius presented June 9, 2018 at the ASM Microbe meeting in Atlanta has suggested kitchen towels as an important source of bacteria that may cause food poisoning. Bacterial growth was found in 49% of the kitchen towels and the chances of bacterial growth increased in proportion to a large family size, more children in the study and extended family. Multipurpose towels had higher colony forming unit (CFU) than single use towels and humid towels had higher CFU than dry ones.

### **Paraguay is Malaria-free, Says WHO**

The WHO has certified Paraguay as having eliminated malaria, the first country in the Americas to be granted this status since Cuba in 1973. “It gives me great pleasure today to certify that Paraguay is officially free of malaria. Success stories like Paraguay’s show what is possible. If malaria can be eliminated in one country, it can be eliminated in all countries,” said Dr Tedros

Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director General, in a recorded statement.

Paraguay was identified as one of 21 countries with the potential to eliminate malaria by 2020 in 2016. Through the “E-2020 initiative,” WHO is supporting these countries as they scale up activities to become malaria-free... (WHO, June 11, 2018).

### **In utero Exposure to Diabetes Increases Risk of Future Type 2 Diabetes in Offspring**

According to a study published online June 11, 2018 in *JAMA Pediatrics*, *in utero* exposure to type 2 diabetes and gestational diabetes increased the risk for developing type 2 diabetes before the age of 30 compared with those who had no exposure to diabetes (3.19 vs. 0.80 vs. 0.26 cases per 1,000 person-years, respectively,  $p < 0.001$ ).

### **Erectile Dysfunction Increases Risk for Heart Disease**

Men with erectile dysfunction were twice as likely to experience heart attacks, cardiac arrests, sudden cardiac death and fatal or nonfatal strokes regardless of other risk factors, such as cholesterol, smoking and high blood pressure, according new research published June 11, 2018 in the journal *Circulation*.

### **Preconception Vitamin D Levels Influence Chances of Conception and Successful Pregnancy**

Women who are not infertile but have a history of pregnancy loss are more likely to conceive and deliver a live infant if their preconception levels of vitamin D are sufficient, suggests a new study published online May 30, 2018 in the *Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology*.

### **EMA Grants Marketing Authorization to Myalepta for Leptin Deficiency**

The European Medicines Agency (EMA)'s Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) has recommended granting of marketing authorization for Myalepta indicated for the treatment of complications of leptin deficiency in patients with generalized or partial lipodystrophy which is often associated with severe metabolic abnormalities, including hypertriglyceridemia, insulin resistance and/or diabetes. Myalepta, which is a recombinant human leptin analog, will be available as an 11.3 mg powder for solution for injection.

### **ESC/ESH 2018 Guidelines for Management of Hypertension**

The new 2018 European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and European Society of Hypertension (ESH)

guidelines recommend treating to a systolic BP target targeting systolic blood pressure to 130 mmHg, and lower if possible, but not lower than 120 mmHg. The recommended target is less than 140 mmHg for patients aged 65 and older, as tolerated, but not less than 130 mmHg.

### **Mediterranean Diet Reduces Risk of Progression to Advanced ARMD**

New data presented May 1 at ARVO 2018, the annual meeting of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, in Honolulu, Hawaii show that eating a Mediterranean diet may reduce the risk of progression to advanced age-related macular degeneration by around 40%.

### **Ten New Swachh Iconic Places Launched Under Swachh Bharat Mission**

Ten new iconic sites, namely, Raghavendra Swamy Temple (Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh); Hazardwari Palace (Murshidabad, West Bengal); Brahma Sarovar Temple (Kurukshetra, Haryana); VidurKuti (Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh); Mana village (Chamoli, Uttarakhand); Pangong Lake (Leh-Ladakh, J&K); Nagvasuki Temple (Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh); ImaKeithal/market (Imphal, Manipur); Sabarimala Temple (Kerala) and Kanvashram (Uttarakhand) have been taken up under Phase III of the flagship project Swachh Iconic Places (SIP) of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

Launched in 2016, the Phase I iconic places are: Ajmer Sharif Dargah, CST Mumbai, Golden Temple, Kamakhya Temple, Maik arnika Ghat, Meenakshi Temple, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, Shree Jagannath Temple, The Taj Mahal and Tirupati Temple.

Phase II of Swachh Iconic Places was launched in Nov 2017, and included Gangotri, Yamunotri, Mahakaleshwar Temple, Charminar, Convent and Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Kalady, Gomateswara, Baidyanath Dham, Gaya Tirth and Somnath Temple... (Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation, June 12, 2018).

### **USPSTF Recommends Against ECG Screen in Low Risk Asymptomatic Adults**

In a statement published June 12, 2018 in *JAMA*, the USPSTF has recommended against screening with resting or exercise ECG to prevent cardiovascular events in asymptomatic adults at low risk of cardiovascular events. (*D recommendation*).

### **US FDA Approves Gamified Neurorehabilitation System**

The US FDA has approved a mobile neurorehabilitation therapy system 'MindMotion GO (MindMaze)' for use in patients with light- and medium-severity neurologic impairments to motivate and engage them in daily rehabilitation.

### **Depression Common in Patients not Able to Return to Work Following a Heart Attack**

New research published in the journal *Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes* has shown that 90% of people who suffer a major heart attack return to work. But, those who cannot return to work or work less report poor quality-of-life, depression and moderate to extreme financial hardship, including difficulty affording medications.

### **Individuals with High BP Below the Threshold for Treatment Initiation also at Risk of Dementia**

New findings from the long-running Whitehall II study of over 10,000 civil servants has found 50 years old who had blood pressure that was higher than normal but still below the threshold commonly used when deciding to treat the condition, were at increased risk of developing dementia in later life. The study is published June 13, 2018 in the *European Heart Journal*.

### **HerbList, a NIH Mobile App on Herbal Products**

The National Institutes of Health's National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health has launched HerbList™, an app for research-based information about the safety and effectiveness of herbal products. It is available on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. The app is designed to help consumers, patients, healthcare providers, and other users to quickly access information about the science of popular herbs and herbal supplements including kava, acai, ginkgo, turmeric and more than 50 others marketed for health purposes.

### **Avoid Aerobic Fitness Training in Early Subacute Stroke**

According to results of the PHYS-STROKE study presented May 18, 2018 at the 4th European Stroke Organisation Conference (ESOC) 2018 in Gothenburg, Sweden, aerobic fitness training in the early subacute phase of stroke should be avoided. Subacute stroke was defined in the study as days 5-45 after stroke, and a Barthel index less than 65 who were unable to sit unsupported for 30 seconds.

### **Health Minister Launches Accelerated Plan for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis**

The Union Health Minister Shri JP Nadda released the accelerated plan for elimination of lymphatic filariasis 2018 at the 10th meeting of Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GAELF).

During his inaugural address, Shri Nadda said that India as a Global leader is committed to eliminating lymphatic filariasis transmission and disease burden so that our future generations are free from lymphatic filariasis. With the concerted efforts of Government, state governments and development partners, 100 districts out of total 256 endemic districts have achieved elimination target and stopped Mass Drug Administration after successful validation by Transmission Assessment Survey (TAS) and are under post-MDA surveillance.

The Union Health Minister further said that the strategy to eliminate lymphatic filariasis in India is based on twin pillars of Mass Drug Administration once in a year to interrupt transmission i.e., no new case and to cater to the patients already afflicted with the disease with morbidity management. There is also an urgent need for total integration of different departments for mobilizing the community and to enhance awareness among the affected communities about the disease and its treatment ... (PIB, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, June 13, 2018)

### **Personalized Goals and Financial Incentives Motivate Heart Patients to Increase their Physical Activity**

A new trial published June 13, 2018 in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* has observed that wearable devices combined with financial incentives and personalized goal-setting significantly increased physical activity among ischemic heart patients. Patients in the incentive group significantly increased their physical activity levels, 1,368 more steps per day and after the financial incentives were stopped in the follow up period, the incentive group still increased their physical activity by 1,154 steps per day compared to the control group.

### **Patients with Type 2 Diabetes at Risk of Parkinson's Disease Later in Life**

People with type 2 diabetes had a 31% increased risk of developing Parkinson's disease later in life, according to a large study published in the June 13, 2018, online issue of *Neurology*. Younger patients aged 25-44 years were at greater risk. The risk was 49% higher in patients who had complications of diabetes.