

News and Views

Free Treatment to All Under 30 by 2022

By 2022, all people up to the age of 30 years will not only get free health check-ups but also free medical treatment, said Union Health Minister JP Nadda. He was in Gorakhpur to inaugurate the Guru Gorakhnath Nursing School and College recently. To attain that goal, he said, the government was transforming primary and community health centers into health wellness centers and more than 20,000 such centers had been made so far... (*ET Healthworld, February 11, 2019*)

Only One-third of Children Covered by Social Protection, Say ILO, UNICEF

Social protection is critical in helping children escape poverty and its devastating effects, yet, the vast majority of children have no effective social protection coverage, UNICEF and the ILO said in a joint report.

Evidence shows clearly that cash transfers play a vital role in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and vulnerability. Yet, globally only 35% of children on average are covered by social protection which reaches 87% in Europe and Central Asia, 66% in the Americas, 28% in Asia and 16% in Africa. At the same time, one in five children lives in extreme poverty (less than US\$ 1.90 a day), and almost half of the world's children live in 'moderate' poverty (under \$3.10 a day). Almost everywhere, poverty disproportionately affects children, as they are twice as likely as adults to live in extreme poverty.

The report calls for the rapid expansion of child and family benefits, with the aim of achieving universal social protection for children, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Such benefits are a key element of policies to improve access to nutrition, health and education, as well as reducing child labor and child poverty and vulnerability... (*UNICEF, February 6, 2019*)

Pregnancy may Increase Risk of Intracerebral Hemorrhage

Pregnancy confers a significantly higher risk of intracerebral hemorrhage (ICH) that peaks during the 3rd trimester and continues into early postpartum, suggests a study presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference. Patients

experiencing ICH during the postpartum period were more likely to be Black or Asian (compared to White), and had a history of hypertension, diabetes, coagulopathy, thrombocytopenia or substance abuse.

Mild TBI may Predispose to Mental Health Problems

Patients with mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) are more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or major depressive disorder (MDD) within 3-6 months after the injury, according to a new study published online January 30 in *JAMA Psychiatry*. Risk factors for probable PTSD at 6 months after mTBI included less education, being black, self-reported psychiatric history and injury resulting from assault or other violence. Risk factors for probable MDD after mTBI were similar except that cause of injury was not associated with increased risk.

Chronic Rhinosinusitis Associated with Increased Risk of Depression and Anxiety

A study from Korea says that chronic rhinosinusitis may increase the risk for depression and/or anxiety. Those who had chronic rhinosinusitis and nasal polyps were found to be at a higher risk for depression or anxiety than those without polyps. The study is published online February 7, 2019 in *JAMA Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery*.

Shorter Course of Radiation Therapy Effective in Men with Prostate Cancer

According to a study published February 8, 2019 in *JAMA Network Open*, men with low- or intermediate-risk prostate cancer can safely undergo higher doses of radiation over a significantly shorter period of time (stereotactic body radiotherapy) and still have the same, successful outcomes as from a much longer course of treatment.

Atta Whole Wheat Flour and Maida Refined Wheat Flour, Says FSSAI

FSSAI, the country's apex food regulator, has directed FBOs (food business operators) to use the English nomenclature of whole wheat flour for atta and refined wheat flour for maida in the labeling of such products, where the same is used either singly or as an ingredient in the food items.

The order said that the use of the term wheat flour or whole wheat flour and refined flour, wherever used either singly or as an ingredient in food items, on the labels of packaged food products has been examined in detail and it was decided that atta should be labeled as whole wheat flour (atta) and maida should be labeled as refined wheat flour (maida), wherever the same is used singly or as an ingredient.

The order said, "It has been observed that FBOs are using the term wheat flour as the English nomenclature for maida on the label of the food products, which does not convey the exact nature of the ingredients used in the manufacturing of various food items to the consumers as well as enforcement officials."... "Food businesses have been directed to comply with the requirements by April 30, 2019. The state machinery has also been asked to ensure compliance with this order. No action shall be initiated against the FBOs until the time limit ends." ... (FSSAI)

Extend Trial Shows Feasibility of Thrombolysis Beyond 4.5-hour Window in Selected Patients

Thrombolysis for acute ischemic stroke is currently restricted to 4.5 hours from onset. But, the results of the EXTEND trial presented at the American Heart Association International Stroke Conference (ISC) have shown that ischemic stroke patients with salvageable brain tissue presenting 4.5-9 hours from onset or with WUS who received alteplase achieved better functional outcomes, reperfusion and early neurological improvement. Mortality was comparable despite numerically more symptomatic intracerebral hemorrhage (sICH).

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Experience Poor Sleep Habits

Children with autism spectrum disorder, and those with other types of developmental delays who have symptoms of the disorder, often have a harder time getting to sleep and staying asleep, according to a study published online February 11, 2019 in the journal *Pediatrics*.

Ultraprocessed Foods Increase Mortality Risk

Eating higher amounts of ultraprocessed foods increases mortality risk, according to a study published online February 11, 2019 in *JAMA Internal Medicine*. The risk for all-cause death increased by 14% for every 10% increase in the amount of dietary ultraprocessed foods consumed. Ultraprocessed foods include

mass-produced, ready-to-eat foods such as packaged snacks, sugary drinks, breads, candies, ready-made meals and processed meats.

Managing Young Women at High Risk of Heart Disease: CMAJ

A new review based on the latest, high-quality evidence published from 2008 to 2018 published February 11, 2019 in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*) provides guidance for physicians to identify and manage premenopausal women at high risk of heart disease. Some key observations are:

- Diabetes, metabolic syndrome and smoking are stronger risk factors in younger women.
- Younger women with ovarian dysfunction may be at higher risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Early menopause because of surgical or chemical interventions may be a risk factor.
- Pregnancy complications, such as gestational hypertension and pre-eclampsia, are linked to higher risk of cardiovascular disease.

Updated ACCP Guidelines on Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension

The American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST) has published updates to the evidence-based guidelines on therapy for pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH). The new guideline published in the journal *Chest* includes 78 evidence-based recommendations for appropriate use in treating patients with PAH. There are two new recommendations about pharmacologic therapy for PAH:

- For treatment-naive patients with PAH who are World Health Organization (WHO) functional Class II and III, initial combination therapy with ambrisentan and tadalafil to improve 6 minute walk distance (6MWD) is suggested.
- For stable or symptomatic patients with PAH on background therapy with ambrisentan, addition of tadalafil to improve 6MWD is suggested.

New WHO-ITU Standard Aims to Prevent Hearing Loss Among 1.1 Billion Young People

Nearly 50% of people aged 12-35 years – or 1.1 billion young people – are at risk of hearing loss due to prolonged and excessive exposure to loud sounds, including music they listen to through personal audio devices. The WHO and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) have issued a new international standard for the manufacture and use of

these devices, which include smartphones and audio players, to make them safer for listening.

The “Safe listening devices and systems: A WHO-ITU standard” recommends that personal audio devices include:

- “Sound allowance” function: software that tracks the level and duration of the user’s exposure to sound as a percentage used of a reference exposure.
- Personalized profile: an individualized listening profile, based on the user’s listening practices, which informs the user of how safely (or not) he or she has been listening and gives cues for action based on this information.
- Volume limiting options: options to limit the volume, including automatic volume reduction and parental volume control.
- General information: information and guidance to users on safe listening practices, both through personal audio devices and for other leisure activities.

(WHO, February 12, 2019)

More than 9,000 Infected with Swine Flu Across the Country

Death toll across the country due to swine flu has soared to 312 according to data released by the Union Health Ministry. Over 9,000 persons have so far been affected by the H1N1 virus, with Rajasthan still topping the list with highest number of cases and deaths, according to the data. Swine flu has affected over 9,000 people in the country with Rajasthan reporting more than 100 deaths and nearly 2,941 cases of infects, followed by Gujarat at 55 deaths and 1,431 people being infected, showed the data. Punjab has reported 30 deaths and 335 cases, followed by Madhya Pradesh, which has reported 22 deaths and 98 cases ... (*The Pioneer-PTI, February 11, 2019*)

BP Variability Indicative of Poor Prognosis Post-Stroke

According to a new study presented at the American Stroke Association’s International Stroke Conference in Honolulu, patients with more variation in their systolic blood pressure (BP), the top number in the measurement, had a higher risk of death within 90 days.

Inexpensive Supplement for Women Increases Infant Birth Size

For women in resource-poor settings, taking a certain daily nutritional supplement before conception or in early pregnancy may provide enough of a boost to

improve growth of the fetus, according to the multi-country Women First trial published February 5, 2019 in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. The supplement consists of dried skimmed milk, soybean and peanut extract blended into a peanut butter-like consistency. Weighing less than an ounce, the supplement is fortified with essential vitamins and minerals and provides protein and fatty acids often lacking in the women’s diets.

Omadacycline Noninferior to Linezolid as Treatment of Acute Bacterial Skin and Skin-Structure Infections

Omadacycline, an aminomethylcycline antibiotic, was noninferior to linezolid for the treatment of acute bacterial skin and skin-structure infections in terms of clinical response and had a similar safety profile, according to a study published February 7, 2019 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Radiolabeled PSMA-targeted Treatment Improves Survival in Men with Metastatic Prostate Cancer

A single-arm, phase II trial in men with PSMA-positive metastatic, castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC) that progressed despite standard therapies, found that in the majority of men, the cancers were responsive to treatment with a novel, targeted radiation therapy called Lutetium-177 PSMA-617 (LuPSMA). Men receiving the medication lived a median of 13.3 months after treatment, longer than the average 9-month survival time for men with this stage of disease.

Exposures to Drug-resistant Brucellosis in the US Linked to Raw Milk

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state health officials are investigating potential exposures to *Brucella* strain RB51 (RB51) in 19 states, connected to consuming raw (unpasteurized) milk from Miller’s Biodiversity Farm in Quarryville, Pennsylvania. One case of RB51 infection (brucellosis) has been confirmed in New York, and an unknown number of people may have been exposed to RB51 from drinking the milk from this farm. This type of *Brucella* is resistant to first-line drugs and can be difficult to diagnose because of limited testing options and the fact that early brucellosis symptoms are similar to those of more common illnesses like flu.

The New York case is the third known instance of an infection with RB51 associated with consuming raw milk or raw milk products produced in the United

States. The other two human cases occurred in October 2017 in New Jersey and in August 2017 in Texas ... (CDC, February 8, 2019)

USPSTF Recommends Counseling for Women at High Risk of Perinatal Depression

The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has recommended that clinicians provide or refer pregnant and postpartum women who are at increased risk of perinatal depression to counseling interventions (B recommendation) in a final recommendation statement published in *JAMA*, online February 12, 2019.

Pembrolizumab + Axitinib Improves Overall Survival and Progression-free Survival in Metastatic Renal Cell Carcinoma

Results from the randomized, phase III KEYNOTE-426 clinical trial show that first-line therapy with a combination of the PD-1 targeted immunotherapy pembrolizumab and the VEGF-targeted tyrosine kinase inhibitor axitinib extended both overall survival and progression-free survival for patients with clear-cell metastatic renal cell carcinoma (mRCC), compared with the current standard of care, sunitinib. The symposium is already over.

Hearing Impairment Associated with Greater Risk of Cognitive Decline

Hearing impairment is associated with accelerated cognitive decline with age, though the impact of mild hearing loss may be lessened by higher education, according to a study published in the February 12, 2019 issue of the *Journal of Gerontology: Series A Medical Sciences*. Those with more serious hearing impairment showed worse performance at the initial visit on the Mini-Mental State Exam (MMSE) and the Trail-Making Test, Part B.

Patients with Hidradenitis Suppurativa at a Greater Risk of Developing Lymphoma

Patients with hidradenitis suppurativa (HS) are at a greater risk of developing lymphoma compared to those who do not have HS. The prevalence of non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) was 0.40% among individuals with and 0.35% among those without HS; the prevalences of Hodgkin lymphoma (HL) were 0.17% vs. 0.09%, respectively and the prevalences of cutaneous T-cell lymphoma (CTCL) were 0.06% vs. 0.02%. These findings were published online in *JAMA Dermatology*.

PumpStart: Teaching CPR to High School Students

In a study reported in the *Journal of Education*, participants in the PumpStart program showed significant improvements in CPR technique and confidence in acquired skills for both the pilot semester (31% vs. 82%, $p < 0.05$) and first year implementation (33% vs. 86%, $p < 0.05$). Medical students reported significantly higher confidence levels regarding abilities to answer questions about CPR, serving as mentors and facilitating training sessions for new medical students after participating in PumpStart.

PumpStart, a community service-learning program developed by medical students, was formed to increase education on compression-only CPR to local high school students and foster leadership and mentorship skills in participating medical students.

Measles Cases Nearly Doubled in a Year, Says WHO

A projected near-doubling of measles infections has been identified amid rising severe and protracted outbreaks all over the planet, in poor and rich countries alike, the WHO said.

The appeal to Member States to close gaps in vaccine coverage follows the previously announced news that an estimated 1,10,000 people died from the highly infectious but easily preventable disease in 2017. "Measles is not going anywhere...It's everyone's responsibility," said Dr Katherine O'Brien, Director of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals at WHO. "For one person infected, up to 9 or 10 people could catch the virus."

The WHO alert follows its announcement that as of mid-January this year, it had seen 2,29,068 reported cases of measles during 2018, in 183 Member States, which have until April to file data on the previous year's disease burden. This is almost double the 1,15,117 cases reported at the same point last year, and WHO's concern is based on the fact that the final number of infections rose to 173,330... (February 14, 2019)

Latest PAHO "Basic Indicators" Show NCDs as the Main Cause of Death in the Americas

The Americas region is home to more than 1 billion people. Every year, 15 million babies are born and nearly 7 million people die. Life expectancy is 80.2 years for women and 74.6 for men. More than 8 in 10 people live in urban areas. These are some of the key statistics presented in the new "2018 Basic Indicators," published by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

The compendium, produced annually, presents PAHO's most recent data from 49 countries and territories on the demographic and socioeconomic situation of the Americas, the population's health status, risk factors and coverage of health care services and health systems. Noncommunicable diseases—such as heart disease, cancer, and stroke—are the main causes of death in the Americas. Regionwide, the death rate from noncommunicable diseases is 427.6 people per 1,00,000 population, which is seven times higher than the death rate from communicable (infectious) diseases, at 59.9 people per 1,00,000 population. ... (PAHO, February 13, 2019)

Glyphosate Herbicide Linked to Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma

Exposure to Glyphosate, a commonly used herbicide, has been found to increase the risk of non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) by 41% in a new meta-analysis by researchers from the University of Washington. The study is published online February 10, 2019 in *Mutation Research/Reviews in Mutation Research*.

First Interoperable Insulin Pump that Allows Patients to Customize Treatment Through their Individual Diabetes Management Devices Gets FDA Go Ahead

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has permitted marketing of the Tandem Diabetes Care t:Slim X2 insulin pump with interoperable technology (interoperable t:Slim X2) for delivering insulin under the skin for children and adults with diabetes. This new type of insulin pump, referred to as an alternate controller enabled (ACE) infusion pump, or ACE insulin pump, is the first interoperable pump, meaning it can be used with different components that make up diabetes therapy systems, allowing patients to tailor their diabetes management to their individual device preferences.

Cognition Declines with Chronic Inflammation in Middle Age

According to a new study published in the February 13, 2019, online issue of *Neurology*, people who have chronic inflammation in middle-age may develop problems with thinking and memory in the decades leading up to old age. Those with the highest levels of inflammation biomarkers had an 8% steeper decline in thinking and memory skills over the course of the study than the group with the lowest levels of inflammation biomarkers.

Low Cardiorespiratory Fitness + Obesity in Adolescents Increases their Likelihood of Future Chronic Disability

Low cardiorespiratory fitness, obesity and the combination of the two in adolescence were strongly associated with chronic disability due to a wide range of diseases and causes in adulthood, says a study published online February 12, 2019 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Advisory Issued Against Retinal Disease Drug

Vitreo Retina Society-India (VRSI), a body of superspecialty doctors in ophthalmology, has issued a country-wide advisory against the use of ranibizumab an injectable drug manufactured by Ahmedabad based Intas Pharmaceuticals Limited, used for treating retinal vascular disease. The VRSI alert was issued on February 9, after 11-odd patients reported adverse reactions like inflammation in eyes. Sources confirmed the company has issued a directive to over 20 hospitals not to dispense a particular batch of ranibizumab injections... (ET Healthworld, February 15, 2019)

ICMR Launches Web-based Tool for Data Recording of Patients Suffering from Cleft Lip

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), in collaboration with the AIIMS launched "IndiCleft", a web-based tool which will help in online and offline data recording of patients suffering from cleft lip or cleft palate.

The robust web-based recording system, which has been developed with the help of the National Informatics Centre (NIC), enhanced with more server space and improved capabilities at ICMR Headquarters, was launched by ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava. IndiCleft is a comprehensive aid for cleft patients covering important components broadly grouped under 10 headings -- demographic, socioeconomic, maternal history, surgical history, dental history, surgical and post-surgical evaluation, ENT evaluation, speech assessment, genetic evaluation and lastly, dental evaluation, Dr OP Kharbanda, the chief of Centre for Dental Education and Research (CDER) at the AIIMS said ... (Business Standard-PTI, Feb/14,2019)

Burnout is a Significant Issue for Doctors Globally, Finds Medscape Report

Burnout and depression are a significant issue for doctors, says the Medscape Global Physicians' Burnout and Lifestyle Comparisons 2019 Report, which surveyed nearly 20,000 doctors in six countries (France, Germany,

Portugal, Spain, United States and United Kingdom); 37% feel burned out and 10% experience both burnout and depression. Burnout was most common in Spain and Portugal. While depression alone was higher in Germany (24%), German doctors were burned out less often than in other countries. Reasons for burnout were given as bureaucratic tasks (paperwork, charts), long working days, lacking respect from employers/administrators/staff/colleagues... (*Medscape*)

OSA Patients with Excessive Daytime Sleepiness at Greatest Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

Adults with obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) who experience excessive sleepiness while awake are at far greater risk for cardiovascular diseases than those without excessive daytime sleepiness, according to new research published online in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*. They were three times as likely to have been diagnosed with heart failure at enrolment and twice as likely to experience a cardiovascular event (heart attack, heart failure, stroke or cardiovascular death) during the follow-up period.

Decolonization Reduces Post-discharge Infection Risk Among MRSA Carriers

Results of the Changing Lives by Eradicating Antibiotic Resistance (CLEAR) trial show that post-discharge methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) decolonization with chlorhexidine and mupirocin led to a 30% lower risk of MRSA infection than education alone in patients colonized with MRSA. The study is published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, February 14, 2019.

Lithium is Safe and Tolerable as Maintenance Therapy for Children with Bipolar Disorder

A trial published in the February 2019 issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* has supported the role of lithium as a maintenance treatment up to 28 weeks in children with bipolar I disorder. Participants who received lithium had a significantly lower relative risk for study discontinuation than those who received placebo.

FDA Approves Triclabendazole for Fascioliasis

The US FDA has approved triclabendazole to treat fascioliasis, a neglected tropical disease, in patients aged 6 years or older. Fascioliasis or liver fluke infestation is a water-borne and food-borne zoonotic disease caused by two species of parasitic flatworms.

Oral Complications Rare in Older Women on Anti-osteoporosis Treatment

Oral complications such as osteonecrosis of the jaw (ONJ) are rare in women taking medications for postmenopausal osteoporosis, according to a study published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*. Researchers used data from the 7-2 year FREEDOM Extension trial to assess information on oral procedures and cases of ONJ in women taking denosumab for postmenopausal osteoporosis. They found 45% of patients had at least one invasive dental procedure, but the overall rate of ONJ was low.

Cardiac Abnormalities Present in Patients with Alzheimer's Disease

ECG and echocardiographic abnormalities, including diastolic dysfunction, are present in patients with Alzheimer's disease and that these studies reproduce the pattern of cardiac amyloidosis, suggests a study published online in the February 2018 issue of *JACC Heart Failure*. These findings indicate that there may be subclinical cardiac involvement in Alzheimer's disease, which is probably associated with deposition of A β amyloid.

Five Dermatologic Emergencies to Know

Recognizing the signs of potentially fatal skin emergencies and knowing when to call for a dermatology consult can save lives. These emergencies will be discussed at Society of Hospital Medicine Annual Meeting 2019 to be held in March. The five dermatologic emergencies that physicians should know are:

- Stevens Johnson syndrome
- Drug Rash with Eosinophilia and Systemic Symptoms (DRESS) syndrome
- Purpura fulminans
- Acute Generalized Exanthematous Pustulosis (AGEP)
- Pyoderma gangrenosum.

Darolutamide Improves Metastasis-free Survival in Nonmetastatic, Castration-resistant Prostate Cancer

Among men with nonmetastatic, castration-resistant prostate cancer, metastasis-free survival was significantly longer with darolutamide, an androgen receptor antagonist, than with placebo. The incidence of adverse events was similar for darolutamide and placebo. These findings were published February 14, 2019 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

e-AUSHADHI Portal for Online Licensing System of Ayush Medicines Launched

Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik, launched the e-AUSHADHI portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters at New Delhi. Addressing the gathering, Shri Naik said that this e-AUSHADHI portal is intended for increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability. This new e-portal is an acronym for Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy Automated Drug Help Initiative. ... (PIB, Ayush, Feb 13, 2019)

16 Crore Indians Consume Alcohol: Survey

At the national level, about 14.6% (16 crore) people (in the 10-75 age group) consume alcohol, with Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa having the highest prevalence of liquor use, a recent government survey has found.

After alcohol, cannabis and opioids are the next commonly used substances in the country, the survey has found. Among those dependent on alcohol, one in 38 reported some form of treatment, while one in 180 reported getting in-patient treatment or hospitalization.

Conducted by the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry in collaboration with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), the survey titled "Prevalence and Extent of Substance Use in India" was conducted in all the 36 states and Union territories.

At the national level, 2,00,111 households were visited in 186 districts and a total of 4,73,569 individuals were interviewed, the report stated.

About 2.8% of Indians (around 3.1 crore) reported having used some cannabis product in the last 12 months.

At the national level, the most commonly used opioid is heroine (used by 1.14% of the people surveyed), followed by pharmaceutical opioids (used by 0.96% of the people surveyed) and opium (used by 0.52% of the people surveyed). About 1.08% (around 1.18 crore) of Indians in the 10-75 age group use sedatives (non-medical, non-prescription use).

At the national level, an estimated 4.6 lakh children and 18 lakh adults need help for inhaler use, the survey found.

Global Conference Calls for Action to Prevent Suffering and Disability from Mycetoma

Delegates attending the Sixth International Conference on Mycetoma in Khartoum, Sudan have endorsed a "Call for action" urging the global community to work together with multilateral agencies, partners, research institutions and pharmaceutical companies to address the devastating consequences of this disease.

Mycetoma, a neglected tropical disease, mainly affects poor, rural populations, particularly people of low economic status who walk barefoot and manual workers, such as agricultural laborers and herdsman... (WHO, February 15, 2019)

Providing Follow-up Care after Heart Attack Helps Reduce Readmissions and Deaths

A program designed to help heart attack patients with the transition from hospital to outpatient care can reduce readmissions and deaths and increase the number of patients keeping follow-up appointments, as per a new study presented at the American College of Cardiology's Cardiovascular Summit in Orlando. The 30-day readmission rate before the program started was 6.3% and fell to 3.7% the year after the program began. There was a reduction in the 30-day death rate (5.75% before vs. 4.57% after program implementation) and an increase in patients' follow-up appointments made prior to discharge (78% vs. 96%).

Outcomes Post-laparoscopic Gastrectomy Comparable to Open Surgery

Patients with stage I gastric cancer who undergo laparoscopic distal gastrectomy have long-term-survival rates similar to those who have open distal gastrectomy, according to a study published online February 7, 2019 in *JAMA Oncology*.

Communication with Patients may Impact Outcomes in Management of Hypertension

In a survey of providers working in small primary care practices, use of communication techniques such as active listening, was associated with a higher proportion of patients who kept their BP under control, compared with clinicians who did not use these methods, according to a study published online February 8, 2019 in *Family Practice*.

