

## News and Views

### **ICMR to Undertake a Nationwide Surveillance of Fruit Bats to Gauge Nipah Virus Threat**

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-National Institute of Virology (ICMR-NIV) will undertake a nationwide surveillance of fruit bats to gauge Nipah virus threat. The move follows the presence of Nipah virus in fruit bats (*Pteropus giganteus*) during the recent outbreak in Kerala, following which 17 people succumbed to the pathogen in May-June 2018.

"In the recent outbreak in Kerala, ICMR-NIV had shown 23% positivity of Nipah virus in the *Pteropus* bats while screening throat and cloacal (rectal) swabs of the mammals captured near the index case's house," scientist Devendra Mourya, Director, ICMR-NIV told TOI. The study also becomes vital as there is no information on the presence of the virus in fruit bats in the country, except West Bengal, Assam and Kerala, which are considered the hotspots of the deadly disease. Experts said the crucial intelligence on the presence of the virus in other areas would help in giving alerts, increase preparedness and contain the human-to-human transmission of the virus to save lives. "About 20 states, including Maharashtra, will be covered in the first phase. The site selection activities have begun in 16 states from January... (TOI, January 13, 2019)

### **Updated Guidelines for Treatment of Migraine**

The American Headache Society (AHS) has published an updated position statement for treatment of migraine online December 10, 2018 in the journal *Headache*. The statement recommends use of evidence-based treatments when possible and appropriate; start with a low-dose and titrate slowly; reach a therapeutic dose if possible; allow for adequate treatment trial duration; establish expectations of therapeutic response and adverse events and maximize adherence. Neuromodulation may be useful for patients who prefer nondrug therapies or who respond poorly, cannot tolerate or have contraindications to pharmacotherapy.

### **Health Hazards from Exposure to Cement Common in Construction Workers**

Men and women laborers at construction sites who handle cement or are exposed to it are at high risk of contracting skin infections owing to the harmful

chemicals it contains, a new study conducted by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi has found. The study, conducted by the AIIMS Department of Dermatology and Venereology along with Sweden's Lund University, with key researchers being Dr Kaushal Verma and Dr Magnus Bruze, found that major concentrations of chemicals like hexavalent chromium in cement can lead to skin problems like dermatitis, eczema, rashes and burning sensation, among others. (*India Today, January 13, 2019*)

### **Whole Body Examination not Necessary to Diagnose Scabies**

According to a study published December 27, 2018 in the journal *PloS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, compared to a full body examination, examination limited to hands, feet and lower legs had 90% sensitivity for detecting scabies. Body regions with highest yield were the hands (sensitivity compared to whole body examination, 51.2%), feet (49.7%) and lower legs (48.3%).

### **A Healthy Diet Precludes the Need of Vitamins or Nutritional Supplements for Most People**

Most people do not need to take vitamins or nutritional supplements as they can get all the nutrients they need by eating a healthy diet, according to a new patient page "Vitamins and Nutritional Supplements What Do I Need to Know?" published online January 7, 2019 in *JAMA Internal Medicine*. It includes information and answers to questions about vitamins and nutritional supplements that patients often have.

### **Takotsubo Syndrome not as Benign as Thought to be**

A systematic review and meta-regression study has shown relatively high rates of life-threatening complications such as acute heart failure (HF) with shock (19%) and malignant arrhythmias (10%), with in-hospital death occurring in 1.8% of cases of Takotsubo syndrome. One percent of the survivors had a recurrent episode. Long-term total mortality in each study was significantly associated with older age, physical stressor and the atypical ballooning form of Takotsubo syndrome. These findings are published January 3, 2019 in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology: Heart Failure*.

### Romozosumab Approved in Japan for Osteoporosis Patients at High Risk for Fracture

Romozosumab has been granted marketing authorization in Japan for the treatment of osteoporosis in patients at high risk of fracture. Romozosumab is a bone-forming agent that increases bone formation and reduces bone resorption to increase bone mineral density (BMD) and reduce the risk of fracture.

This approval is significant because approval of the agent has been held up in the United States because of safety concerns following the ARCH study, which reported a higher rate of serious adverse cardiovascular events with the drug compared with the bisphosphonate alendronate in May 2017.

### New Hope with Ebola Drug Trial

There is no cure for Ebola and the mortality rate in this outbreak is about 60%. However, there is new cause for hope. Since the start of this current outbreak in August 2018 - the tenth to hit the DRC since Ebola was discovered in 1976 - patients have had access to one of four investigational treatments on a compassionate basis. These drugs were offered under an ethical framework developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) known as the Monitored Emergency Use of Unregistered Interventions (MEURI) protocol. By January 1, 248 patients had received one of these four drugs. While some patients seemed to improve, there was no scientific evaluation of the efficacy and safety of these drugs.

So, on November 24, the DRC's Ministry of Public Health announced the start of a randomized control trial (RCT). WHO is coordinating the trial which is led and funded by the DRC's Institut National de Recherche Biomédicale (INRB) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a part of the US Department of Health and Human Services. Other partners are MSF and ALIMA.

"This is the first multi-drug trial for Ebola treatments, and the rigorous collection and analysis of data is expected to deliver clarity about which drug works best," says Dr Janet Diaz, WHO's team lead for clinical management of emerging infectious diseases and, in this current outbreak, the team lead for care of patients with Ebola. "This will ultimately save lives in future outbreaks - either in the DRC or in other countries." (*WHO Africa*)

### Public Health England Launches New Measles and Rubella Elimination Strategy

Public Health England has published a new strategy for measles and rubella elimination. The strategy focuses

on 4 core components required to maintain elimination of measles and rubella:

- Achieve and sustain  $\geq 95\%$  coverage in the routine childhood program.
- Achieve  $\geq 95\%$  coverage with 2 doses of MMR vaccine in older age cohorts through opportunistic and targeted catch-up.
- Strengthen measles and rubella surveillance.
- Ensure easy access to high-quality, evidence-based information.

(*Public Health England*)

### 10 Threats to Global Health in 2019: WHO

1. Air pollution and climate change
2. Noncommunicable diseases
3. Global influenza pandemic
4. Fragile and vulnerable settings
5. Antimicrobial resistance
6. Ebola and other high-threat pathogens
7. Weak primary health care
8. Vaccine hesitancy
9. Dengue
10. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

### Physical Activity Reduces Mortality in Patients with Diabetes

Patients with type 2 diabetes should be prescribed physical activity to control blood sugar and improve heart health, according to a Position Paper of the European Association of Preventive Cardiology titled "Exercise training for patients with type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease: What to pursue and how to do it" published January 15, 2019 in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*.

### Women Who Undergo IVF with Frozen Embryos at Higher Risk of Pre-eclampsia

Researchers found that pre-eclampsia rates reached 12.8% in women receiving frozen embryos under a programmed cycle without a corpus luteum compared with 3.9% among women who had frozen embryo transfers under a modified natural cycle with a corpus luteum, in a study reported in the journal *Hypertension*. Women without a corpus luteum lacked relaxin, so their blood vessels may remain stiff as shown in the study, particularly the aorta.

### Clinical Trial Testing Fecal Microbiota Transplant for Recurrent Diarrheal Disease Begins

A research consortium recently began enrolling patients in a clinical trial examining whether fecal microbiota transplantation (FMT) by enema—putting stool from a healthy donor in the colon of a recipient—is safe and can prevent recurrent *Clostridium difficile*-associated disease (CDAD), a potentially life-threatening diarrheal illness. Investigators aim to enroll 162 volunteer participants, 18 years or older, who have had two or more episodes of CDAD within the previous 6 months.

### Sleeping Less than 6 Hours a Night may Increase Risk of Heart Disease

People who sleep less than 6 hours a night may be at increased risk of cardiovascular disease compared with those who sleep for 7-8 hours, suggests a new study published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* online January 14, 2019. Participants who slept less than 6 hours were 27% more likely to have atherosclerosis versus those who slept 7-8 hours. Those who had a poor quality of sleep were 34% more likely to have atherosclerosis than those who had a good quality of sleep.

### Heavy Sweating that Led to an Unexpected Diagnosis

A 60-year-old man struggled with unexplained sweating episodes for 3 years before doctors diagnosed him with temporal lobe seizures, according to a case study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. The man was otherwise healthy but had "an average of 8 discrete episodes of sweating" every 24-32 days, the authors said. These episodes lasted several minutes. He had no other symptoms, and all tests that doctors ran on him returned normal results. Doctors saw one of these sweating episodes while the patient was on an office visit, the case study said. The patient reported that "he felt it coming on; he lowered his head into his hands and had slowed verbal responses for approximately 2 minutes."

The doctors described his sweating as "profuse" and detailed a pool of sweat left on an examination table. The changes in the patient's responsiveness, something that "suggested a seizure," led the doctors to perform an ambulatory electroencephalography (EEG), which led to his diagnosis. The patient has since been prescribed anti-seizure medication and has had only one cluster of sweating episodes in the past 18 months. (CNN)

### Parents do not Realize Teens have Suicidal Ideation and Thoughts of Death, Says Study

Half of parents surveyed were unaware of their teenagers' thoughts of killing themselves, and more than 75% were unaware of their teens' recurrent thoughts of death, according to a study published online January 14, 2019 in *Pediatrics*. Researchers found a high lack of parental awareness of youth suicidal ideation or thoughts of death, and also a significant number of teens who denied suicidal thoughts reported by parents.

### Oral Antibiotics Reduce Intestinal Necrosis in Acute Mesenteric Ischemia

By decreasing luminal bacterial load and translocation, oral antibiotics, in addition to early revascularization, might reduce progression of acute mesenteric ischemia to irreversible transmural intestinal necrosis, suggests a prospective cohort study published online December 11, 2018 in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*. Use of oral antibiotics was independently linked to reduced irreversible transmural intestinal necrosis risk (hazard ratio, 0.16).

### Cabozantinib Approved as Second-line Treatment for Advanced Liver Cancer

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved cabozantinib recently for the second-line treatment of hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) in patients who progressed or were intolerant of sorafenib.

### History of Allergic Reaction is an Important Part of Evaluation of Penicillin Allergy

A review article published in the January 15, 2019 issue of *JAMA* on evaluation and management of penicillin allergy says that many patients report they are allergic to penicillin but few have clinically significant reactions. A comprehensive history of the reaction that led to allergy documentation can help determine the patient's risk level.

- Low-risk history includes patients having isolated nonallergic symptoms, such as gastrointestinal symptoms, or patients solely with a family history of a penicillin allergy, symptoms of pruritus without rash, or remote (>10 years) unknown reactions without features suggestive of an IgE-mediated reaction.
- Moderate-risk history includes urticaria or other pruritic rashes and reactions with features of IgE-mediated reactions.

- High-risk history includes patients who have had anaphylaxis, positive penicillin skin testing, recurrent penicillin reactions or hypersensitivities to multiple  $\beta$ -lactam antibiotics.

### **USPSTF Recommends Risk-reducing Medications to Women at Increased Risk for Breast Cancer**

The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has published draft Recommendation Statement on the use of medication to reduce risk for breast cancer. The draft is open for public comment through February 11, 2019.

It recommends that clinicians offer to prescribe risk-reducing medications, such as tamoxifen, raloxifene or aromatase inhibitors, to women who are at increased risk for breast cancer and at low risk for adverse medication effects. But, the USPSTF has recommended against the routine use of risk-reducing medications, such as tamoxifen, raloxifene or aromatase inhibitors, in women who are not at increased risk for breast cancer.

### **Amplatzer PDA Occluder for Premature Babies Approved by the US FDA**

The US FDA has approved the Amplatzer Piccolo Occluder, the first medical device to treat patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) in premature babies weighing as little as two pounds (907 g).

### **Study Finds High Burden of Mental Illness in Young-onset Type 2 Diabetes**

People who develop young-onset type 2 diabetes, before 40 years of age, are at increased risk for hospitalizations across their lifespan compared with persons with usual-onset type 2 diabetes, including an unexpectedly large burden of mental illness in young adulthood, according to findings from a study published online January 14, 2019 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

### **ACP Releases New Edition of its Ethics Manual**

The American College of Physicians (ACP) has released the seventh edition of its Ethics Manual, published as a supplement to the current issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine*. New or significantly expanded sections of the ACP Ethics Manual include precision medicine and genetic testing, research and protection of human subjects, telemedicine, electronic communications, social media and online professionalism, electronic health records, and physician volunteerism. The manual also revisits issues that are still very pertinent and in which ACP has maintained long-standing positions, such as on end-of-life care and physician-assisted suicide, physician-industry relations, and

complementary and integrative care... (ACP, January 15, 2019).

### **Union Cabinet Approves Draft Bill for National Commission for Homeopathy**

The Union Cabinet has approved the draft National Commission for Homeopathy Bill, 2018, which seeks to replace the existing regulator Central Council for Homeopathy (CCH) with a new body to ensure transparency.

The draft bill provides for the Constitution of a National Commission with three autonomous boards entrusted with conducting overall education of Homeopathy by Homeopathy Education Board. The Board of Assessment and Rating to assess and grant permission to educational institutions of Homeopathy and Board of Ethics and Registration of Practitioners of Homeopathy to maintain National Register and ethical issues relating to practice are under the National Commission for Homeopathy.

It also proposes a common entrance exam and an exit exam, which all graduates will have to clear to get practicing licenses. Further, a teacher's eligibility test has been proposed to assess the standard of teachers before appointment and promotions ... (ET Health, January 16, 2019)

### **WHO Launches Awareness Campaign on Social Inclusion for People with Mental Disabilities in Turkey**

People with mental disabilities can face high levels of discrimination in society if the stigma that surrounds mental illness is not addressed and challenged. WHO is committed to ensuring that such people are socially included. A project, co-funded by the European Union and WHO, is set to break down the barriers against inclusion of people with mental disabilities in Turkey.

The Social Inclusion of Persons with Mental Disabilities project was launched during an official ceremony on December 5, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey. The project aims to enhance the competence of the workforce providing health care services to people with mental disabilities and to improve the community-based healthcare services currently being implemented on a national scale... (WHO Europe, January 16, 2019)

### **New British Nutrition Foundation Portion-size Guidelines**

The British Nutrition Foundation has released new portion-size guidelines designed to help people eat the

right amounts of each food group, and possibly help them avoid overeating. The portion sizes are averages for healthy adults, based on a daily calorie allowance of 2,000 kcal - the amount estimated for an average, healthy weight, adult woman. Measures using hands and spoons have been provided to make them easier to follow. For example:

- Two handfuls of dried pasta shapes or rice (75 g)
- A bunch of spaghetti the size of a £1 coin, measured using your finger and thumb (75 g)
- The amount of cooked pasta or rice that would fit in two hands cupped together (180 g)
- A baked potato about the size of your fist (220 g)
- About 3 handfuls of breakfast cereal (40 g)
- A piece of cheddar cheese about the size of two thumbs together (30 g)
- About 1 tablespoon of peanut butter (20 g)
- About 3 teaspoons of soft cheese (30 g).

### **Air Pollution is the Greatest Environment Risk to Health, Says WHO**

Nine out of 10 people breathe polluted air every day. In 2019, air pollution is considered by WHO as the greatest environmental risk to health. Microscopic pollutants in the air can penetrate respiratory and circulatory systems, damaging the lungs, heart and brain, killing 7 million people prematurely every year from diseases such as cancer, stroke, heart and lung disease. Around 90% of these deaths are in low- and middle-income countries, with high volumes of emissions from industry, transport and agriculture, as well as dirty cookstoves and fuels in homes.

The primary cause of air pollution (burning fossil fuels) is also a major contributor to climate change, which impacts people's health in different ways. Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause 2,50,000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress.

In October 2018, WHO held its first ever Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health in Geneva. Countries and organizations made more than 70 commitments to improve air quality. This year, the United Nations Climate Summit in September will aim to strengthen climate action and ambition worldwide. Even if all the commitments made by countries for the Paris Agreement are achieved, the world is still on a course to warm by >3°C this century... (WHO)

### **TAVR Patients on DAPT at Higher Risk of Bleeding Events**

Transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) patients who are discharged with dual antiplatelet therapy (DAPT) may have a significantly higher risk of major bleeding events versus patients who are discharged with antiplatelet monotherapy, according to a study published in the *American Heart Journal*. Rates of death, stroke and myocardial infarction at 1 year were similar between patients on DAPT and those on monotherapy. However, patients on DAPT had a significantly higher risk of major bleeding events.

### **Vaccine-preventable Infections are Common in Children Post-solid Organ Transplants**

In a multicenter cohort study of 6,980 pediatric solid organ transplant recipients at a Pediatric Health Information System center, 16% of individuals had at least 1 hospitalization for a vaccine-preventable infection in the first 5 years after transplant. Children who received transplants when they were younger than 2 years and transplant recipients of lung, intestine, heart and multivisceral organs were at greater risk for hospitalization with a vaccine-preventable infection. These findings were reported in *JAMA Pediatrics* online January 14, 2019. The most common infections were influenza, rotavirus, varicella, pneumococcus and respiratory syncytial virus.

### **India's First Paperless Government Hospital Opens in Ahmedabad**

India's first digital paperless hospital was thrown open to the public when Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Institute of Medical Sciences and Research in Ellis Bridge recently. Part of the Ayushman Bharat Program, this hospital will provide free treatment to the poor. Culled from the decades-old VS Hospital, the 18-storeyed state-of-the-art super-specialty hospital was built at a cost of Rs. 750 crore. According to Modi, the 1,500-bed hospital is "the first government hospital with a helipad for the air ambulance"... (ET Health, January 18, 2019)

### **Anti-vaccination Movement as Top Health Threat for 2019, Says WHO**

The WHO has listed the anti-vaccination movement among the top health threats globally in 2019.

Vaccine hesitancy - the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines - threatens to reverse progress made in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases.

Measles, for example, has seen a 30% increase in cases globally. The reasons for this rise are complex, and not all of these cases are due to vaccine hesitancy. However, some countries that were close to eliminating the disease have seen a resurgence.

The reasons why people choose not to vaccinate are complex; a vaccines advisory group to WHO identified complacency, inconvenience in accessing vaccines, and lack of confidence as key reasons underlying hesitancy. Health workers, especially those in communities, remain the most trusted advisor and influencer of vaccination decisions, and they must be supported to provide trusted, credible information on vaccines.

In 2019, WHO will ramp up work to eliminate cervical cancer worldwide by increasing coverage of the HPV vaccine, among other interventions. 2019 may also be the year when transmission of wild poliovirus is stopped in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Last year, less than 30 cases were reported in both countries ... (WHO)

### **Ebola Outbreak in Congo Crosses 600 Cases**

The Democratic Republic of Congo's Ebola outbreak, which began August 1, is continuing unabated in the new year. The total number of probable patients is now 663, while 407 deaths are likely attributable to the viral illness, the Ministry of Health said recently. An additional 123 people, who doctors suspect may be sick with Ebola, are currently under investigation. The ministry also reported that 237 people have recovered from the life-threatening illness... (CNN, January 17, 2019)

### **First Generic Version of Vigabatrin to Help Treat Seizures Gets FDA Nod**

The US FDA has approved the first generic version of vigabatrin 500 mg tablets for treating complex partial seizures, also called focal seizures, as an adjunctive therapy (given with another primary treatment) in patients 10 years and older who have responded inadequately to several alternative (refractory) treatments.

### **Study Shows Association Between Frailty and Dementia of Alzheimer's Disease**

Frailty appeared to modify the association between Alzheimer's disease pathology and Alzheimer's dementia in older adults, according to a cross-sectional analysis of data from the Rush Memory and Aging Project published in *The Lancet Neurology*. As Alzheimer's disease frailty increased, the relationship between pathology and dementia weakened - suggesting that

the frailer people are, the less likely they could tolerate a given burden of Alzheimer's disease pathology.

### **Making Simple Healthy Changes in Lifestyle can Boost Longevity**

A study published in the journal *Circulation*, which examined five specific lifestyle factors linked to longevity, found that those who adopted all five had a life expectancy at age 50 of 14 years longer for women and 12 years longer for men than those who adopted none of the healthy steps.

1. Regular physical activity - The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends at least 150 minute/week of moderate-intensity physical activity or 75 minute/week of vigorous aerobic activity. You can also do a combination of the two.
2. Appropriate body weight - Maintain a body mass index (BMI) of 18.5-24.9.
3. A healthy diet - Select plenty of fruits and vegetables, and try to work them into every meal and snack. Other foods to emphasize in a healthy eating pattern are whole grains, low-fat dairy products, skinless poultry and fish, nuts and legumes and nontropical vegetable oils. Try to limit sodium, red meat, saturated fat and sugars, including sugary beverages. Remember to drink plenty of water for hydration.
4. Don't smoke.
5. Drink in moderation - The AHA considers moderate alcohol consumption to be an average of 1-2 drinks/day for men and 1 drink/day for women. (A drink is 12 ounces of beer, 4 ounces of wine, 1.5 ounces 80-proof spirits or 1 ounce 100-proof spirits).

### **Ultraviolet Disinfection Very Effective in Eliminating Pathogens in Hospital Settings**

Using ultraviolet (UV) disinfection technology to reduce the risk of hospital-acquired infections eliminated up to 97.7% of pathogens in operating rooms (ORs), according to a study published January 17, 2019 in the *American Journal of Infection Control*.

### **Moving More in Old Age may be Linked to Sharper Memory**

Older adults who move more, either with daily exercise or even simple routine physical activity like housework, may preserve more of their memory and thinking skills, even if they have brain lesions or biomarkers linked to dementia, according to a study

published in the January 16, 2019, online issue of the journal *Neurology*.

### **Health Ministry Bans 80 More Fixed-dose Combination Drugs**

The Union Health Ministry has banned 80 more fixed-dose combination (FDC) drugs which include antibiotics, painkillers, medicines used for treating fungal and bacterial infections, hypertension and anxiety, officials said recently. A notification was issued by the government, stating that the ban has come into force since January 11, they said.

With this, the total number of banned FDCs now stands at 405. Another 325 drugs were banned in September last year. (*ET Health-PTI, January 18, 2019*)

### **Heart Patients should Avoid Oral Decongestants and NSAIDs**

The AHA has cautioned about the use of oral decongestants like pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). People with uncontrolled high BP or heart disease should avoid taking oral decongestants like pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine. NSAIDs, which carry a warning label about the increased risk for a heart attack or stroke can be especially risky for people with heart disease or heart failure. NSAIDs reduce the amount of sodium excreted through the urine, which increases fluid retention and raises BP.

### **Gene Sequencing Approach may Help Tailor Treatments for Pediatric Kidney Transplant Recipients**

Whole-exome sequencing of blood or saliva revealed a genetic diagnosis of kidney disease in 32.7% of pediatric kidney transplant recipients in a study published online January 17, 2019 in the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*. The findings indicate that such a sequencing strategy may help individualize pre- and post-transplant care for many young kidney transplant recipients. The chances of detecting a genetic diagnosis was highest for patients with urinary stone disease, followed by renal cystic ciliopathies, steroid-resistant nephrotic syndrome, congenital anomalies of the kidney and urinary tract, and chronic glomerulonephritis.

### **Single-dose Tafenoquine Prevents *Plasmodium vivax* Malaria Relapse**

Single-dose tafenoquine resulted in a significantly lower risk of *Plasmodium vivax* recurrence than placebo

in patients with phenotypically normal G6PD activity in a study published online January 17, 2019 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The hazard ratio for the risk of recurrence was 0.30 with tafenoquine as compared with placebo and 0.26 with primaquine as compared with placebo.

### **Confidentiality Discussions may Help Young Patients Open-up About Sensitive Topics**

Fewer than half of young people reported having discussed 10 of 11 specific topics recommended by national medical guidelines at their last visit, in a study published online January 16, 2019 in the journal *Pediatrics*. On average, young women discussed 3.7 of the topics, while males averaged 3.6. Factors independently associated with health discussions were - ever talked with a provider about confidentiality, ever had private time with a provider, use of health checklist and/or screening questionnaire at last visit and time spent with provider during last visit.

### **Serum Cryptococcal Antigen Titers Predict Mortality in HIV-infected Patients with Cryptococcal Meningitis**

Serum cryptococcal antigen (CrAg) titers  $\geq 1:1,024$  not only were associated with concurrent cryptococcal meningitis but also predicted mortality, says a study published in the January 2019 issue of *HIV Medicine*. The study further suggests that HIV-infected patients with a positive serum CrAg test during screening should receive lumbar punctures regardless of symptoms to rule out cryptococcal meningitis and patients with serum CrAg titres  $\geq 1:1,024$  should be offered immediate care.

### **New 'Planetary Health Diet' can Save Lives and the Planet**

An international team of scientists has developed a diet it says can improve health while ensuring sustainable food production to reduce further damage to the planet. And it can prevent up to 11.6 million premature deaths without harming the planet, says the report published in the medical journal *The Lancet*.

The "planetary health diet" is based on cutting red meat and sugar consumption in half and upping intake of fruits, vegetables and nuts. The authors warn that a global change in diet and food production is needed as 3 billion people across the world are malnourished, which includes those who are under and overnourished and food production is overstepping environmental targets, driving climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution... (*CNN*)