

## News and Views

### **Nearly 30 Million Sick and Premature Newborns in Dire Need of Treatment Every Year**

Nearly 30 million babies are born too soon, too small or become sick every year and need specialized care to survive, according to a new report “Survive and Thrive: Transforming care for every small and sick newborn” by a global coalition that includes UNICEF and WHO.

The report finds that among the newborn babies most at risk of death and disability are those with complications from prematurity, brain injury during childbirth, severe bacterial infection or jaundice, and those with congenital conditions. Additionally, the financial and psychological toll on their families can have detrimental effects on their cognitive, linguistic and emotional development.

“For every mother and baby, a healthy start from pregnancy through childbirth and the first months after birth is essential,” said Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Deputy Director General for Programmes at WHO. “Universal health coverage can ensure that everyone - including newborns - has access to the health services they need, without facing financial hardship. Progress on newborn healthcare is a win-win situation - it saves lives and is critical for early child development thus impacting on families, society and future generations.” (UN, Dec. 13, 2018)

### **Half of Syria’s Children have Grown up Only Seeing Violence as Conflict Nears 8-year Mark: UNICEF**

With an estimated 4 million children born in Syria since the conflict started nearly 8 years ago, half of the country’s children have grown up only knowing war, UNICEF said recently. Reaching them wherever they are and meeting their immediate and future needs remains a priority. “Every 8-year-old in Syria has been growing up amidst danger, destruction and death,” said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director, at the end of a 5-day visit to the conflict-ravaged country. “These children need to be able to return to school, receive their vaccinations, and feel safe and protected. We need to be able to help them.” (UNICEF, Dec. 13, 2018).

### **Risk of Dementia Increased Among Female Veterans with TBI, PTSD and Depression**

Female military veterans who have traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or

depression, long after their service, may be more likely to later develop dementia than female veterans without those conditions, according to a study published in the December 12, 2018, online issue of *Neurology*.

### **Comparable Clinical Outcomes Between Percutaneous Repair and Medical Treatment for Secondary MR**

Among patients with severe secondary mitral regurgitation, the rate of death or unplanned hospitalization for heart failure - primary efficacy outcome - at 1 year did not differ significantly between patients who underwent percutaneous mitral-valve repair in addition to receiving medical therapy and those who received medical therapy alone. These findings were published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, online December 13, 2018.

### **Severe Active IBD Reduces Sperm Motility and Testosterone Levels**

According to a study reported in the *Journal of Crohn’s and Colitis*, online November 30, 2018, severe active inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) reduces progressive sperm motility and testosterone levels.

The levels of testosterone normalized after obtaining remission. The active disease; however, was not found to affect sperm DNA integrity. Anti-TNF-alpha therapy does not impair sperm quality.

### **First Proton Therapy Facility in the Country Cleared by AERB for Cancer Treatment**

The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has issued license on 29/11/2018 to operate the proton therapy facility at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai for treatment of cancer patients. The proton therapy facility, Proteus 235, is the first of its kind facility in India and South East Asia. There are about 78 such facilities operating all over the world. The license is issued by AERB for patient treatment with proton beam of 226 MeV from radiation safety view point.

In the country, presently AERB has licensed around 1,000 radiotherapy equipments in around 475 medical institutions. These radiation therapy equipments for patient treatment are either gamma radiation based Tele-Cobalt units or are X-ray based Linear Accelerators. The AERB “License for operation” for the proton therapy facility was issued after AERB approval

at each stage, i.e. design, layout, construction and commissioning of the facility. The appropriate cost of proton radiation facility is about 500 crores... (*Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, Dec. 13, 2018*).

### **RCOG Recommendations on Pain Management During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding**

A new Scientific Impact Paper from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) has issued recommendations on the management of pain for women during pregnancy and breastfeeding. The findings support use of appropriate pain relief options, as advised by NHS guidance.

- It recommends that, where possible, all drugs should be avoided during the first trimester - up to 12 weeks of pregnancy - but some will need to be continued to prevent harm to a woman.
- Paracetamol was found to have an excellent safety profile and is recommended as a first-line pain medication during pregnancy and breastfeeding.
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) - such as ibuprofen - should be avoided unless clinically indicated, such as for a severe migraine, within the first trimester and should not be taken after 30 weeks of gestation due to increased risk to the baby. However, NSAIDs are safe to use during breastfeeding.
- Opioids should only be taken based on the advice of a doctor or midwife, but the review notes all opioids are equally safe during pregnancy.
- Dihydrocodeine is safe to take during breastfeeding but codeine should be avoided.
- The lowest effective dose should be used when taking any pain relief medication - even those bought over the counter - for the shortest possible duration to minimize any potential risks to the mother and baby.

(Source: RCOG News, Dec. 13, 2018)

### **New AHA Report on Mental Health in the Workplace**

The American Heart Association (AHA) released a comprehensive report titled "Mental Health: A Workforce Crisis" focusing on mental health in the workplace—an issue the organization wants employers in the US to tackle head-on. The report highlights the connection between mental health and a host of cardiovascular comorbidities, including established links between depression and heart disease, obesity and diabetes. It states around one in five people with heart

disease also struggle with depression, and depression is three times more common in patients after they've had a heart attack. Diabetics—who make up roughly 4.6% of the US population—also see higher rates of depression. The report states 12% of diabetics are depressed, though two-thirds don't seek treatment. Obesity, as well, increases a person's likelihood of depression.

The report was commissioned by the AHA's CEO Roundtable and conducted by the association's Center for Workplace Health Research and Evaluation "to underscore the business imperative to employers for providing comprehensive, science-based support for employee mental health." The report was co-signed by AHA CEO Nancy Brown, Johnson & Johnson CEO Alex Gorsky and Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan.

### **Subclinical Hypothyroidism may Worsen Heart Failure**

A new study published December 14, 2018 in the journal *Circulation: Heart Failure* has suggested that subclinical hypothyroidism and low T3 syndrome may worsen heart failure. Compared with heart failure patients who had normally functioning thyroid, those with subclinical hypothyroidism or low T3 syndrome had greater probability of needing a ventricular assist device or a heart transplant. They also had a higher risk of death.

### **AAP Policy Statement on Impact of Perinatal Depression in Pediatric Practice**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has recommended that physicians should screen women for depression during and after pregnancy and detail the health implications for children. According to an updated policy statement "Incorporating recognition and management of perinatal depression into pediatric practice," maternal depression can affect a baby's health before and after birth, and it is one of the most common and costly obstetric complications in the United States when left undiagnosed and untreated. The policy statement and an accompanying technical report were published online Dec. 17 in the journal *Pediatrics*.

### **A 6-day-old Baby Survives Ebola**

A baby girl who was diagnosed with Ebola when she was only 6 days old has survived, health officials in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have confirmed. Baby Benedicte's mother was infected with Ebola and died during childbirth. Benedicte showed symptoms only days later and it has taken 5 weeks of round-the-clock treatment to keep her alive. "Her father, Thomas,

was very emotional... she is his first baby," a health ministry spokeswoman told the BBC.

Ebola is a deadly infection that causes severe fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and internal and external bleeding. About half of those infected die, but babies are even less likely to survive.

She was born on 31 October 2018 and was cared for at the Ebola Treatment Center in Beni, the city hardest hit by the outbreak in DR Congo. She is the youngest patient for whom doctors and volunteers there have cared... (*BBC Health, Dec 14, 2018*).

### Baseline HPV Status Influences the Future Risk of Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia

Results of a 9-year Swedish nested case-control follow-up study reported in the journal *Cancer* show that the presence of human papillomavirus (HPV)-16/18 among women with negative for intraepithelial lesions or malignancy (NILM) cytology is associated with an elevated future risk of high-grade cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN). HPV types other than HPV-16/18 seem to have a greater impact on women aged 30 years or older, than younger women. Women with NILM cytology and HPV-16/18 need specific follow-up management within screening.

### E-cigarettes Less Toxic to Users than Cigarettes, Says Study

A new study published December 14, 2018 in the journal *JAMA Network Open* suggests that e-cigarettes are less toxic than traditional cigarettes. Comparison of nicotine and toxicant exposure in users of electronic cigarettes and combustible cigarettes revealed that current exclusive e-cigarette users had greater concentrations of biomarkers of nicotine, tobacco-specific nitrosamines, volatile organic compounds, and metals compared with never tobacco users. But, these levels were lower than those observed in current exclusive cigarette smokers and dual users of both products.

### FDA Warns the Glitter on Holiday Treats may not be Sweet to Eat

The agency has issued a warning that glitter and dusting used on baked goods may contain materials that should not be eaten. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says this is how you can tell whether the glitter or dusting is safe to eat:

- ⇒ Carefully check the label of any decorative product you're considering for use in foods. Companies that make edible glitters and dusts are required by law to include a list of ingredients on the label.

- ⇒ Common ingredients in edible glitter or dust include sugar, acacia (gum arabic), maltodextrin, cornstarch and color additives specifically approved for food use, including mica-based pearlescent pigments and Food and Drug Cosmetic (FD&C) colors such as FD&C Blue No. 1.
- ⇒ Most edible glitters and dusts also state "edible" on the label. If the label simply says "nontoxic" or "for decorative purposes only" and does not include an ingredients list, you should not use the product directly on foods.
- ⇒ If you choose to decorate a food item with decorations that are not edible, be sure to remove the decorations before serving and eating the food.

The agency also recommends customers talk to their bakery to make sure the decorative products they use are edible... (*Source: <https://www.wtsp.com>*)

### Madras HC Bars e-sale of Drugs from Thursday

In what could be a big disappointment for e-pharmacies and a huge inconvenience to patients, the Madras high court barred online sale of medicines from December 20, while directing the government to expedite regulations for e-pharmacies. The court, in its final order, asked the government to notify regulations by January 31, 2019, after which stakeholders will have to obtain licences within a period of 2 months. Representatives of online pharmacies said they are planning to appeal against the order soon.

The government is yet to come out with a notification amending the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, which will regulate online pharmacies. Recently, the expert committee under the health ministry, Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB), approved the draft regulations for sale of online drugs by e-pharmacies. Earlier, the Delhi High Court and Madras High Court had passed interim orders stopping the sale of online drugs.

Though the draft to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Act was issued in August, the final guideline—after taking into account comments from stakeholders—was to follow through a notification. As on date, there are no proper rules or regulations for online trading of medicines, the judgment, a copy of which was available with TOI, said... (*ET Health, Dec. 18, 2018*)

### Thailand Becomes First in Asia to Introduce Tobacco Plain Packaging

The WHO has commended stronger tobacco control measures being adopted by Thailand which has become

the first in Asia and the first low and middle-income country to adopt plain packaging for tobacco products.

“Thailand’s bold steps against tobacco - the single most important cause of preventable deaths worldwide – is commendable and reflects the country’s earnest efforts in promoting health and well-being of its people,” said Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia, congratulating Thailand for the tobacco legislation on plain packaging adopted last week.

The new legislative announcement on plain packaging is the latest effort of Thai government and adds to the Tobacco Control Act, 2017, which enforces 20 years as the minimum age for purchasing tobacco, bans single stick sale and bans tobacco advertisement, promotion and sponsorship.

Plain packaging of tobacco products restricts or prohibits the use of logos, colors, brand images or promotional information on packaging other than brand names and product names displayed in a standard color and font style. Plain packaging is an evidence-based policy being advocated by WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), a legal treaty that aims to protect present and future generations against the devastating health and socioeconomic impact of tobacco use.

As per Thailand’s new legislation, by September 2019 all tobacco products will have plain packaging. Thailand already has graphic health warnings covering 85% packaging of tobacco products. Introduction of plain packaging is expected to further boost the country’s tobacco control efforts targeting the current and new users... (SEAR/PR/1704)

### **Two New AIIMS to be Established in Tamil Nadu and Telangana**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the establishment of two new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Madurai, Tamil Nadu and Bibinagar, Telangana. The institutes will be set up under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

Each new AIIMS will add 100 UG (MBBS) seats and 60 BSc (Nursing) seats, 15-20 Super Specialty Departments and will add around 750 hospital beds... (*Press Information Bureau, Dec. 17, 2018*)

### **Record 169 UK Patients a Week Get Diabetes-related Amputations**

A record 169 people a week undergo an amputation procedure as a result of diabetes, a study has found.

Analysis by the charity Diabetes UK found that 26,378 people had lower limb amputations linked to diabetes between 2014 and 2017, a 19.4% rise from 2010 to 2013.

The charity urged NHS England to maintain beyond 2019 its £ 44m diabetes “transformation fund”, which aims to improve patients’ access to specialist foot care teams to help avoid amputations.

It said at least £1 in every £140 spent by the NHS went towards foot care for people with diabetes... (*The Guardian, Dec. 17, 2018*)

### **AAP Offers Guidance on Caring for Psychosocial Needs of Children with Special Healthcare Needs**

To equip pediatricians in caring for these children, the AAP has published a new clinical report, “Psychosocial Factors in Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs and Their Families” online Dec. 17, 2018 in the journal *Pediatrics*. Gerri Mattson, MD, FAAP, lead author of the report said, “The AAP urges pediatricians to promote protective psychosocial factors as part of a coordinated comprehensive care for children with special needs and their families. A team-based approach with community partners such as child care and schools can help with the mitigation of risk factors and promotion of protective factors such as healthy parenting techniques, stress reduction and social services, to increase resiliency.” (AAP)

### **US FDA Approves Prucalopride for Treatment of Chronic Constipation**

Prucalopride, a selective 5-HT<sub>4</sub> serotonin receptor agonist, has been approved by the US FDA for treating adults with chronic idiopathic constipation. The first-in-class oral drug is taken once-daily and acts by enhancing colonic peristalsis to increase bowel motility.

### **Child Given World’s First Drone-delivered Vaccine in Vanuatu**

Recently, 1 month old Joy Nowai became the world’s first child to be given a vaccine delivered commercially by drone in a remote island in the South Pacific country of Vanuatu.

The vaccine delivery covered almost 40 km of rugged mountainous terrain from Dillon’s Bay on the west side of the island to the east landing in remote Cook’s Bay, where 13 children and 5 pregnant women were vaccinated by Miriam Nampil, a registered nurse. Cook’s Bay, a small, scattered community that does not have a health center or electricity, is only accessible

by foot or small local boats. "Today's small flight by drone is a big leap for global health," said Henrietta H Fore, UNICEF, Executive Director. "With the world still struggling to immunize the hardest to reach children, drone technologies can be a game changer for bridging that last mile to reach every child."

Vaccines are difficult to transport as they need to be carried at specific temperatures. Warm weather locations like Vanuatu, which is made up of more than 80 remote, mountainous islands stretching across 1,300 km and with limited roads, is a particularly difficult location for vaccine delivery.

As a result, almost 20% of the country's children - or 1 in 5 - miss out on their essential childhood vaccines.

"It's extremely hard to carry ice boxes to keep the vaccines cool while walking across rivers, mountains, through the rain, across rocky ledges. I've relied on boats, which often get cancelled due to bad weather," said Miriam Nampil, the nurse who injected the world's first drone-delivered vaccine. "As the journey is often long and difficult, I can only go there once a month to vaccinate children. But now, with these drones, we can hope to reach many more children in the remotest areas of the island." (UNICEF, Dec. 18, 2018)

### Study Links Pelvic Floor Disorders to Mode of Delivery Among First-time Mothers

A study funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and published Dec. 18, 2018 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* has shown an association between the mode of delivery and a first-time mother's risk of pelvic floor disorders.

After 9 years of the study duration, women who delivered by Cesarean were at approximately half the risk of developing stress urinary incontinence and overactive bladder vs. women who had a spontaneous vaginal birth. They also had a 70% lower risk of pelvic organ prolapse. Women who had operative vaginal delivery doubled their likelihood of developing anal incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse than women who delivered by cesarean.

### Researchers Develop Global Checklist for Hospital Antimicrobial Stewardship Programs

Researchers at the Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics and Policy (CDDEP), in collaboration with researchers at the Université de Lorraine, the Qatar Foundation, and the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) have developed a Checklist for Hospital Antimicrobial Stewardship Programming

(CHASP). The list was based on an expert panel's review of published scientific research and existing checklists including the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Core Elements of Hospital Antibiotic Stewardship Programs, and was published in the journal *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*. The seven core components of CHASP address:

- Senior hospital management and leadership
- Accountability and responsibility
- Access to infection management professionals
- Education and practical training
- Continuous monitoring and surveillance of stewardship activities
- Reporting and sharing of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial monitoring data
- Actions aimed at responsible antimicrobial use.

The checklist was tested in 12 Leading Health Systems Network hospitals across nine countries including low-income countries. Overall, participating institutions had between 11 and 29 of the 29 checklist items present. Four checklist items were present in all participating institutions and included: a multidisciplinary structure for ASP, an identified ASP leader, access to trained infection management professionals, and monitoring of the quantity of antimicrobials prescribed. The checklist and complete results of the pilot testing are published in the journal *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*.

### A Hybrid Tobramycin Nebulizer Solution Approved for Pseudomonas Infections in Cystic Fibrosis

A hybrid tobramycin nebulizer solution for chronic pulmonary infection resulting from *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in patients aged 6 years and older with cystic fibrosis has been approved by the European Medicines Agency's (EMA's) Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP).

It will be available as a 170 mg nebulizer solution. The active substance is tobramycin, an aminoglycoside antibiotic which primarily affects bacterial protein synthesis resulting in rapid concentration-dependent bacterial cell death... (EMA)

### Saudi Arabia Adopts Plain Packaging on Tobacco Products

The Saudi Food and Drug Authority has informed manufacturers and importers of tobacco products to get ready for applying plain packaging on all forms of tobacco products. This step was done in close collaboration with

the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, and in line with WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and its guidelines, which Saudi Arabia is party to. Saudi Arabia is one of the first few countries around the world to implement plain packaging and, is the only country in this region to do so.

The Saudi Food and Drug Authority has given manufacturers and importers of tobacco products a grace period until May 1, 2019. Failure to comply on this date will subject them to legal action. In preparation for this, the Saudi Food and Drug Authority has issued a "model plain package" to all manufacturers and importers of these products to guide the preparation of plain packaging for cigarette and waterpipe products, as well as all other products, smoked and smokeless. This "model" provides specifics on the standard color and font style to be used, and also includes sample health warnings to be incorporated onto the packs.

#### Plain packaging on tobacco products

A "plain" tobacco package is one that displays brand names and product names in a standard color and font style, without using logos, colors, brand images or promotional information (inside and/or outside the packaging). This is a ground-breaking step for tobacco control because plain packaging is one of the most effective public health interventions for reducing the demand for tobacco. It also:

- Influences the intention of smokers to quit
- Reduces the attractiveness of tobacco products
- Restricts use of tobacco packaging as a form of tobacco advertising and promotion
- Limits misleading packaging and labelling
- Increases the effectiveness of health warnings.

(WHO, December 2018)

#### The Lower House of the Indian Parliament Passes Bill, Which Bans Commercial Surrogacy

A Bill that bars commercial surrogacy and allows only close relatives to act as surrogates to needy infertile couples for "altruistic" reasons was passed by the Lok Sabha recently with Health Minister JP Nadda terming the proposed legislation historic. The "Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016" was passed after an hour-long debate amid noisy protests by Congress and AIADMK members over various issues. Nadda said different sections of society, political parties, the Supreme Court and the Law Commission have spoken against commercial surrogacy and that the bill addresses these concerns... (ET Health, Dec. 19, 2018)

#### In Just 6 Months, Exercise may Help those with Thinking Problems

Getting the heart pumping with aerobic exercise, like walking or cycling for 35 minutes three times a week, may improve thinking skills in older adults with cognitive impairments, according to a study published in the December 19, 2018 online issue of *Neurology*. After 6 months of exercise, study participants' scores on thinking tests improved by the equivalent of reversing nearly nine years of aging.

#### Giving Birth Associated with Increased Risk of Heart Disease and Stroke

A study published December 20, 2018 in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology* says that women who had given birth had a 14% higher chance of developing heart disease or stroke than those who had never given birth. Each birth was associated with a 4% higher likelihood of developing cardiovascular disease, regardless of body mass index, diabetes, hypertension, smoking and income level.

#### HIV-2 is not as Benign as Thought to be

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-2 is more pathogenic than previously believed, and both HIV-1-infected and HIV-2-infected individuals have a high probability of developing and dying from acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) without antiretroviral treatment, suggests a study published online November 1, 2018 in *The Lancet HIV*. The median time from HIV infection to development of AIDS was 6.2 years for HIV-1 infection and 14.3 years for HIV-2 infection ( $p < 0.0001$ ). The median survival time after HIV infection was 8.2 years for HIV-1 infection and 15.6 years for HIV-2 infection ( $p < 0.0001$ ).

#### Deadly Marburg Virus Found in Sierra Leone Bats

Scientists have discovered live Marburg virus in fruit bats in Sierra Leone - the first time the deadly virus has been found in West Africa.

Five Egyptian rousette fruit bats tested positive for active Marburg virus infection. Scientists caught the bats separately at locations in three health districts: Moyamba, Koinadugu and Kono. There have been no reported cases of people sick with Marburg in Sierra Leone, but the virus's presence in bats means people nearby could be at risk for contracting Marburg virus. Marburg virus is a cousin to Ebola virus that causes a similar, often fatal disease in people. Testing of samples from four of the five Marburg-positive bats found

multiple genetically diverse strains. This suggests that Marburg virus has been present in these Sierra Leone bat colonies for many years.

Egyptian fruit bats live in caves or underground mines throughout much of Africa. Marburg virus has been detected in Egyptian rousette bats caught in sub-Saharan Africa, primarily in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, but also Gabon, Kenya and South Africa.

Scientists have shown that the Egyptian rousette bat (*Rousettus aegyptiacus*) is the natural reservoir for Marburg virus, which means the bats can carry the virus for a long time without getting sick themselves. They can then pass it on to humans or other animals through their saliva, urine, or feces ... (CDC, Dec. 21, 2018)

### WHO Launches Technical Guidance Series on the Health of Refugees and Migrants

WHO marked the International Migrants Day on December 18, 2018 with the launch of a technical guidance series on the health of refugees and migrants. Produced in collaboration with the European Commission, each publication addresses a specific aspect of the health of refugees and migrants by providing tools, case studies and evidence to inform practices and policies to improve their health.

Five publications are currently available, each with a special focus on one of the following:

- children's health;
- health promotion;
- healthy ageing;
- maternal and newborn health; and
- mental health.

This technical guidance series complements the forthcoming "Report on the health of refugees and migrants in the WHO European Region", which will be published online in the first quarter of 2019... (WHO)

### Government Plans Survey to Check Health of its Nutrition Mission

After launching 'Poshan Abhiyan' from Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu in March, the Union government now plans to conduct a survey to check the efficacy of the nutrition scheme that aims to reduce malnutrition among children and mothers. People aware of the matter told ET that the Ministry of Women and Child Development will be in charge of conducting the survey, which will be conducted in three phases till March 2020. The

ministry will hire an agency for the task. The proposed survey's first report—covering a sample of 100,000 'anganwadis'—is expected to come in by March 2019. There are nearly 1.4 m 'anganwadis' across the country and all will be surveyed in a phased manner, the persons cited earlier said... (ET Health, December 21, 2018)

### FDA Cautions About Increased Risk of Ruptures or Tears in the Aorta

In a safety alert issued December 20, 2018, the FDA has cautioned that fluoroquinolone antibiotics can increase the occurrence of rare but serious events of ruptures or tears in the main artery of the body, called the aorta. These tears, called aortic dissections or ruptures of an aortic aneurysm, can lead to dangerous bleeding or even death. They can occur with fluoroquinolones for systemic use given by mouth or through an injection.

FDA recommends that healthcare professionals should:

- Avoid prescribing fluoroquinolone antibiotics to patients who have an aortic aneurysm or are at risk for an aortic aneurysm, such as patients with peripheral atherosclerotic vascular diseases, hypertension, certain genetic conditions such as Marfan syndrome and Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, and elderly patients.
- Prescribe fluoroquinolones to these patients only when no other treatment options are available.
- Advise all patients to seek immediate medical treatment for any symptoms associated with aortic aneurysm.
- Stop fluoroquinolone treatment immediately if a patient reports side effects suggestive of aortic aneurysm or dissection.

(Source: FDA)

### Zoledronate Prevents Fractures in Older Women with Osteopenia

The risk of nonvertebral or vertebral fragility fractures was significantly lower in women with osteopenia who received zoledronate than in women who received placebo, according to a study reported December 20, 2018 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. As compared with the placebo group, older women who received zoledronate had a lower risk of nonvertebral fragility fractures (hazard ratio [HR], 0.66;  $p = 0.001$ ), symptomatic fractures (HR, 0.73;  $p = 0.003$ ), vertebral fractures (odds ratio, 0.45;  $p = 0.002$ ), and height loss ( $p < 0.001$ ).

## WHO Confirms Case of Yellow Fever in Netherlands, Says Risk Low

A case of yellow fever, an acute and contagious mosquito-borne viral disease, has been reported in a man in the Netherlands who recently traveled to Gambia and Senegal, the WHO said recently. The risk of further spread of the disease in the Netherlands is very low, the WHO said, in part because the virus is carried by types of mosquito rarely seen in northern Europe.

There have been no other reports of confirmed yellow fever cases from Senegal, Gambia or the Netherlands at this time, it added, but international health authorities have alerted officials in the two West African countries, since transmission and further cases there are more likely.

The WHO advises travelers to countries where the disease is common to get vaccinated at least 10 days beforehand. The man in the Dutch case was not vaccinated. After returning to the Netherlands on November 17, he felt ill and was hospitalized on November 19 with symptoms of acute liver failure. "This case ... illustrates the importance of maintaining awareness of the need for yellow fever vaccination, especially in areas with favorable environments for yellow fever transmission, such as Gambia and Senegal," the WHO said ... (*Medscape*)

## WHO 5 Tips for a Healthy Diet this New Year

### Eat a variety of food

- In your daily diet, aim to eat a mix of staple foods such as wheat, maize, rice and potatoes with legumes like lentils and beans, plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, and foods from animal sources (e.g. meat, fish, eggs and milk).
- Choose wholegrain foods like unprocessed maize, millet, oats, wheat and brown rice when you can; they are rich in valuable fibre and can help you feel full for longer.
- Choose lean meats where possible or trim it of visible fat.
- Try steaming or boiling instead of frying foods when cooking.
- For snacks, choose raw vegetables, unsalted nuts

and fresh fruit, rather than foods that are high in sugars, fats or salt.

### Cut back on salt

- When cooking and preparing foods, use salt sparingly and reduce use of salty sauces and condiments (like soy sauce, stock or fish sauce).
- Avoid snacks that are high in salt, and try and choose fresh healthy snacks over processed foods.
- When using canned or dried vegetables, nuts and fruit, choose varieties without added salt and sugars.
- Remove salt and salty condiments from the table and try and avoid adding them out of habit; our tastebuds can quickly adjust and once they do, you are likely to enjoy food with less salt, but more flavor!
- Check the labels on food and go for products with lower sodium content.

### Reduce use of certain fats and oil

- Replace butter, lard and ghee with healthier oils such as soybean, canola (rapeseed), corn, safflower and sunflower.
- Choose white meat like poultry and fish which are generally lower in fats than red meat, and limit the consumption of processed meats.
- Check labels and always avoid all processed, fast and fried foods that contain industrially-produced trans fat. It is often found in margarine and ghee, as well as pre-packaged snacks, fast, baked and fried foods.

### Limit sugar intake

- Limit intake of sweets and sugary drinks such as fizzy drinks, fruit juices and juice drinks, liquid and powder concentrates, flavored water, energy and sports drinks, ready-to-drink tea and coffee and flavored milk drinks.
- Choose healthy fresh snacks rather than processed foods.

Avoid giving sugary foods to children. Salt and sugars should not be added to complementary foods give to children under 2 years of age, and should be limited beyond that age.

