



DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY
Monday 20220321

Maternal exposure

Maternal exposure to plastic chemical may up asthma, wheezing risk in girls (The Tribune:20220321)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/maternal-exposure-to-plastic-chemical-may-up-asthma-wheezing-risk-in-girls-379230>

Bisphenols are chemical substances used in the manufacture of plastics and resins found in many consumer products, such as food cans, reusable bottles and toys

Maternal exposure to plastic chemical may up asthma, wheezing risk in girls
Photo for representational purpose only.

Prenatal exposure to bisphenol A (BPA) may have negative effects on respiratory health in school-age girls, warns a study.

Bisphenols are chemical substances used in the manufacture of plastics and resins found in many consumer products, such as food cans, reusable bottles and toys.

The most well-known is BPA, a known endocrine disruptor used widely in the manufacture of food containers and the interior coatings of such recipients.

It is already known that bisphenols are present in maternal milk and that they can cross the placental barrier.

The new study, published in the journal Environment International, revealed an association in girls between concentrations of BPA in maternal urine during pregnancy and an increased risk of asthma and wheezing at school age.

A two-fold increase in the concentration of BPA was linked to a 13 per cent higher risk of respiratory symptoms.

This association was not, however, observed in boys or in the case of the other two bisphenols studied. Neither were any associations observed between prenatal BPA exposure and lung function at school age.

"Our results are in line with those of earlier studies, which have also reported that bisphenol A has a negative impact on respiratory health in childhood," said Alicia Abellan, from Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal) in Spain.

"We believe that the effect may be due the fact that bisphenols can cross the placental barrier and interfere with the child's respiratory and immune systems during the developmental phase," she explained.

The team analysed data from more than 3,000 mother-child pairs from six European countries - Spain, France, Greece, Norway, the Netherlands and the UK - collected between 1999 and 2010.

High prevalence of BPA as found in 90 per cent of the samples.

"Bisphenols are endocrine disruptors and can interfere with sex hormones. As our findings suggest, this may give rise to differences in the effects they have depending on the sex of the person exposed," said Maribel Casas, ISGlobal researcher.

Polio virus

Israel detects traces of polio virus in sewage samples (The Tribune:20220321)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/israel-detects-traces-of-polio-virus-in-sewage-samples-379227>

Last week, two children in Jerusalem tested positive and a further five children are suspected to have contracted polio in the capital city, the report said

Israel detects traces of polio virus in sewage samples
Photo for representational purpose only.

Israel is seeing an outbreak of polio virus after more than three decades.

Traces of the virus have been found in three more Israeli cities as two children have already tested positive for polio, Jerusalem Post reported.

The traces were found in sewage samples in Beit Shemesh, Modi'in Illit, and Tiberias, according to a Health Ministry update.

Last week, two children in Jerusalem tested positive and a further five children are suspected to have contracted polio in the capital city, the report said.

The cases are the first in Israel since 1989. The Health Ministry has urged Israeli parents to vaccinate their children against polio if they have not done so already.

Polio is a highly infectious disease that invades the nervous system and can cause total paralysis within hours. While there is no cure, it can be prevented by a vaccine.

Polio virus is seeing a resurgence in many countries including in Africa and eastern Europe.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Saturday announced that more than 80 million polio doses will be administered to over 23 million children under five years in a mass vaccination campaign in the African nations of Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Malawi declared an outbreak on February 17, the first such case in the country in 30 years, and the first in Africa since the region was certified free of indigenous wild poliovirus in 2020.

War-torn Ukraine is also grappling with an outbreak of vaccine-derived polio with two cases in the country's west last year, and the most recent in December. Poliovirus was also isolated from 19 healthy contacts, Nature reported.

Ukraine's ongoing conflict with Russia has also paused a three-week campaign to vaccinate nearly 140,000 children, launched on February 1; it has also hit polio surveillance, so the virus might be spreading undetected, warns the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, based in Geneva.

Recently the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also issued a travel advisory to "Afghanistan, areas in Iran, Israel, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Yemen" regarding polio outbreaks.

Heart attack

Why women are more likely to die after heart attack than men (The Tribune:20220321)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/why-women-are-more-likely-to-die-after-heart-attack-than-men-379201>

Why women are more likely to die after heart attack than men

Women are less likely to receive life-saving treatment for cardiogenic shock than men and thus, are more at risk of death, according to research.

Cardiogenic shock is a life-threatening condition in which the heart suddenly fails to pump enough blood to supply the body's organs with sufficient oxygen.

It is usually caused by a large heart attack. It is estimated that up to 10 per cent of patients with heart attacks affecting a large area of the heart also develop cardiogenic shock.

Only half of patients who experience cardiogenic shock will survive.

Researchers from Copenhagen University Hospital in Denmark showed that significantly lower proportions of women received mechanical circulatory support (19 per cent women versus 26 per cent men), minimally invasive or surgical procedures to restore blood flow to blocked arteries (83 per cent women versus 88 per cent men), and mechanical ventilation (67 per cent women versus 82 per cent men).

Women were thus less likely than men to survive in the short- and long-term. At 30 days after the heart event, just 38 per cent of women were alive compared with 50 per cent of men.

At 8.5 years, 27 per cent of women were alive compared with 39 per cent of men.

"There is increasing evidence that women with acute heart problems are more likely than men to have non-specific symptoms such as shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, coughing, fatigue, and pain in the back, jaw or neck," said Dr. Sarah Holle from the varsity.

"Increased recognition that women may have symptoms other than chest pain could minimise delays in diagnosis and treatment and potentially improve prognosis," she added.

The findings were presented at ESC Acute CardioVascular Care 2022, a scientific congress of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC).

A total of 1,716 heart attack patients with cardiogenic shock were enrolled in the study, of which 438 (26 per cent) were women. The average age of women was 71 years compared with 66 years for men.

"The findings indicate that greater awareness among health professionals that women have heart attacks and may develop cardiogenic shock could be a step towards equitable management and outcomes," Holle said.

Covishield dose

Second Covishield dose can be given between 8-16 weeks after first dose: NTAGI (The Tribune:20220321)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/second-covishield-dose-can-be-given-between-8-16-weeks-after-first-dose-ntagi-379190>

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Presently, the second dose of Covishield is given between 12-16 weeks after the first dose

Second Covishield dose can be given between 8-16 weeks after first dose: NTAGI

Photo for representational purpose only. Reuters file

India's apex body on immunisation NTAGI has recommended administering the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine Covishield between eight and 16 weeks after the first dose, official sources said on Sunday.

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Presently, the second dose of Covishield is given between 12-16 weeks after the first dose under the National COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy.

The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) has not yet suggested any change in the schedule of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, whose second dose is administered 28 days after the first dose.

The recommendation for Covishield is yet to be implemented in the national COVID-19 vaccination programme.

"The latest recommendation of NTAGI is based on recent global scientific evidence derived from programmatic data," said an official source.

"According to it, when the second dose of Covishield is given eight weeks onwards, the antibody response generated is almost similar when administered at an interval of 12 to 16 weeks," the source explained.

The decision will lead to accelerated administration of the second dose of Covishield to the remaining six to seven crore individuals amid rising cases in several countries, the source said.

The government had on May 13, 2021 extended the gap between the first and second doses of the Covishield vaccine from 6-8 weeks to 12-16 weeks based on the recommendations by NTAGI.

NTAGI provides guidance and advice to the Union Health Ministry on immunisation services for the effective control of vaccine-preventable diseases in the country.

Future Covid waves

Future Covid waves unlikely to have serious impact in India, say experts (The Tribune:20220321)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/future-covid-waves-unlikely-to-have-serious-impact-in-india-say-experts-379189>

Some call for easing mask mandate as daily Covid cases and deaths have remained low

Future Covid waves unlikely to have serious impact in India, say experts
Photo for representational purpose only. iStock

Amid a resurgence of COVID-19 cases in Southeast Asia and parts of Europe, experts in India feel that given the high vaccination coverage and immunity due to natural infection, any future waves are unlikely to have a major impact in the country.

Some of them even said that the government should consider relaxing the mask mandate as the daily COVID-19 cases and deaths have remained low for a while.

India on Sunday recorded 1,761 fresh COVID-19 cases, the lowest in around 688 days, and 127 deaths. The active cases also declined further to 26,240, according to government data.

Dr Sanjay Rai, senior epidemiologist at AIIMS and the principal investigator of Covaxin trials for both adults and children at the institute, said that SARS-CoV-2 is an RNA virus and mutations are bound to occur.

Already more than 1,000 mutations have occurred, although there are only five variants of concern.

“India experienced a very devastating second wave last year, which was very unfortunate, but currently this is our main strength as natural infection provides better and longer duration of protection. Also, there is high vaccination coverage. Hence, severe impact of any future wave is unlikely,” Rai, professor at the Centre for Community Medicine at AIIMS, said.

“It is also time that the Indian government may consider relaxing the mask mandate,” he said, adding that senior citizens and those at a higher risk of contracting the infection should continue wearing masks as a precautionary measure.

Having said that, Rai emphasised, the government should continue with the SARS-CoV-2 surveillance, including genomic sequencing, to monitor the emergence of any future variant.

According to Dr Chandrakant Lahariya, an epidemiologist and public health specialist, the possibility of a fresh surge in India is low even with a new variant.

“If we analyse data on seroprevalence, vaccination coverage and evidence on the spread of Omicron, it is logical to conclude that the COVID-19 epidemic in India is over. For India, the possibility of a fresh surge for many months and even with a new variant is low,” he said.

The reason is that because of the hybrid immunity after three waves of natural infection and a large proportion of adults receiving both doses of COVID-19 vaccine, the susceptible pool has come down drastically, Lahariya said.

“We know that antibody level declines over a period of time but hybrid immunity continues to provide protection. Moreover, at this stage of the pandemic, infections and new COVID-19 cases are not a concern. The outcome of those infections should be the criteria to assess the situation,” he said.

Lahariya, however, stressed the need for the government to continue tracking situations in other countries, experts to analyse the situation in India, continue genomic surveillance and citizens to get the recommended vaccine shots. "It is also a time that as a society, we prepare for living with Covid," he said.

Omicron Infection

On Covid, WHO lists 3 misleading facts, says 'Omicron is not the last variant that we have to deal with'

Says vaccines remain incredibly effective at preventing severe disease and death(The Tribune:20220321)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/on-covid-who-lists-3-misleading-facts-says-omicron-is-not-the-last-variant-that-we-have-to-deal-with-379148>

On Covid, WHO lists 3 misleading facts, says 'Omicron is not the last variant that we have to deal with'

File photo of workers line up for Covid test outside an office building in Beijing. AP/PTI

Amid rise in Covid-19 cases globally, WHO's Maria Van Kerkhove listed three misleading facts about the virus that is causing confusion among people.

"We have huge amounts of misinformation that's out there. The misinformation that Omicron is mild. Misinformation that the pandemic is over. Misinformation that this is the last variant that we will have to deal with. This is really causing a lot of confusion," Ms Kerkhove said.

99.9% of sequences provided in the last 30 days are #Omicron. Among those Rs75% are BA.2 & 25% BA.1. All of these are variants of concern. However, our ability to track Omicron is compromised because testing is reduced. You can't sequence those who you do not test! @mvankerkhove pic.twitter.com/7o1KthIQ4c

— Cleavon MD 🗨️ 🗨️ 🗨️ (@Cleavon_MD) March 18, 2022

She said Covid-19 vaccines remain incredibly effective at preventing severe disease and death, including against Omicron.

COVID-19 vaccines remain incredibly effective at preventing severe disease and death, including against Omicron @mvankerkhove pic.twitter.com/tXs8LU5Esz

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China on Saturday reported two Covid deaths, the first since January 2021, amid a spike in the coronavirus cases prompting authorities to rule out relaxing the much-criticised "dynamic zero-Covid" policy of restricting international travel to control the latest outbreak.

The latest surge in cases in the last few weeks was a two year high in the country, denting official claims of China being one of the best performers in curbing Covid pandemic.

New infections jumped by 8 per cent globally compared to the previous week, with 11 million new cases. The biggest jump was in the WHO's Western Pacific region, which includes South Korea and China, where cases rose by 25 per cent and deaths by 27 per cent.

Vaccine

On Covid, WHO lists 3 misleading facts, says 'Omicron is not the last variant that we have to deal with'

Says vaccines remain incredibly effective at preventing severe disease and death(The Tribune:20220321)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/on-covid-who-lists-3-misleading-facts-says-omicron-is-not-the-last-variant-that-we-have-to-deal-with-379148>

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File photo of workers line up for Covid test outside an office building in Beijing. AP/PTI

Tribune Web Desk

Chandigarh, March 20

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Natural Covid antibodies

Natural Covid antibodies last 7 months in children: Study(The Tribune:20220321)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/natural-covid-antibodies-last-7-months-in-children-study-378947>

Natural Covid antibodies last 7 months in children: Study
Photo for representation only.

Children previously infected with Covid-19 develop natural circulating antibodies that last for at least seven months, finds a new study.

The study showed that while 96 per cent of those infected with Covid-19 continued to have antibodies up to seven months later, well over half (58 per cent) of the samples were negative for infection-induced antibodies at their third and final measurement.

“These findings are important because the information we collected from children infected with Covid-19 didn't differ at all by whether a child was asymptomatic, the severity of symptoms, when they had the virus, were at a healthy weight or had obesity, or by gender. It was the same for everyone,” said researcher Sarah Messiah from The University of Texas Health at Houston.

For the study, published in the journal 'Pediatrics', the team examined data from 218 children across the state of Texas between the age of 5 and 19 who were enrolled in the Texas CARES survey that began in October 2020 to assess Covid-19 antibody status over time among a population of adults and children in Texas.

The volunteers who enrolled for the study provided researchers with three separate blood draws. Samples were collected before the vaccine rollout and during the Delta and Omicron variants. To date, investigators have completed three different phases of the study.

The researcher said that the results are just a step in understanding the virus' impact on children.

To date, 14 million kids in the US have tested positive for the virus, she said.

IANS

TB

Government employing multi-sectoral, holistic response towards TB elimination: Official

In a roundtable organised by the Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) in the capital on Wednesday, three crucial health sectors — maternal health, adolescent health and TB — were brought into focus, and their problems and a way forward discussed (The Tribune:20220321)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/government-employing-multi-sectoral-holistic-response-towards-tb-elimination-official-378612>

Government employing multi-sectoral, holistic response towards TB elimination: Official
Photo for representational purpose only.

The government has been employing a multi-sectoral, holistic and intersectional response towards eliminating tuberculosis, a senior official said, noting that its work also ensures providing digital solutions that are cost-effective.

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In a roundtable organised by the Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) in the capital on Wednesday, three crucial health sectors — maternal health, adolescent health and TB — were brought into focus, and their problems and a way forward discussed.

H L Mohan, CEO, KHPT elaborated on how their experience has shown that involvement of members from the TB patients' community results in a greater and more relevant understanding of the problems.

With World TB Day approaching on March 24, the address by Dr. Rajendra Joshi, Deputy Director-General, National, Tuberculosis Elimination Programme, was of particular importance.

“The government has been employing a multi-sectoral, holistic and intersectional response towards TB elimination. Our work also ensures the utilisation digital solutions are provided for a cost-effective approach,” he said.

Dr. Dalbir Singh, president, Global Coalition Against TB, spoke about the government's leadership in reaching the goal of a 'TB Mukh Bharat' (India free of tuberculosis) through a groundswell across the country.

"The elected representatives must be included in the response for TB. This should not be limited to the top officials, but also involve working with Panchayati Raj Institutions. Their sensitization and participation in the process is crucial for building awareness and expanding access to the services at the grassroots level," Singh said.

Respiratory illness

Omicron infection linked with common respiratory illness in children: Study (The Tribune:20220321)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/omicron-infection-linked-with-common-respiratory-illness-in-children-study-378328>

Omicron infection linked with common respiratory illness in children: Study
Photo for representational purpose only. Reuters file

Infection with the Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus is associated with a common respiratory illness in young children, known as croup, a previously unrecognised complication of COVID-19, according to a study.

The observational study, published recently in the journal Pediatrics, describes 75 children who came to the Boston Children's Hospital emergency department (ED) with croup and COVID-19 from March 1, 2020, to January 15, 2022.

The researchers noted that some cases were surprisingly severe, requiring hospitalisation and more medication doses compared to croup caused by other viruses, adding that just over 80 per cent occurred during the Omicron period.

"There was a very clear delineation from when Omicron became the dominant variant to when we started seeing a rise in the number of croup patients," said study first author Ryan Brewster, from Boston Children's Hospital and Boston Medical Center.

Croup, also known as laryngotracheitis, is a common respiratory illness in babies and young children.

The illness is marked by a distinctive barking cough and sometimes noisy, high-pitched intakes of breath known as stridor.

It happens when colds and other viral infections cause inflammation and swelling around the voice box, windpipe, and bronchial tubes.

In severe cases, including some seen at Boston Children's, croup can dangerously constrict breathing, the researchers said.

Previous studies of COVID-19 in animals have found that the Omicron variant has more of a "preference" for the upper airway than earlier variants, which mainly targeted the lower respiratory tract.

This may account for the sudden appearance of croup during the Omicron surge, Brewster said.

Most of the children with COVID-19 and croup were under age 2, and 72 per cent were boys. Except for one child with a common cold virus, all others were infected with SARS-CoV-2.

Although no children died, nine of the 75 children with COVID-19-associated croup (12 per cent) needed to be hospitalised and four of them (44 per cent, or 5 per cent of the total) required intensive care, the researchers said.

By comparison, before COVID-19, fewer than 5 per cent of children with croup were hospitalised, and of those, only 1 to 3 per cent required intubation, they said.

Overall, 97 per cent of the children were treated with dexamethasone, a steroid.

All of those who were hospitalised received treatment which is reserved for moderate or severe cases, as did 29 per cent of children treated in the ED.

"Most cases of croup can be managed in the outpatient setting with dexamethasone and supportive care," said Brewster.

"The relatively high hospitalisation rate and the large number of medication doses our COVID-19 croup patients required suggests that COVID-19 might cause more severe croup compared to other viruses," he added.

Pandemic

The spring blues: On India's recovery two years into the pandemic (The Hindu:20220321)

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/the-spring-blues-the-hindu-editorial-on-indias-recovery-two-years-after-pm-modi-announced-the-lockdown/article65243191.ece>

A fresh guard is needed to nurture India's fledgling economic recovery from the pandemic. This week, India will complete two years since the Government embarked on what is now considered the harshest and quickest lockdowns in the world in a bid to block entry points for the infectious COVID-19 virus. The efficacy of that lockdown, both in terms of curbing

infection rates (and mortality rates) and the accompanying hardships imposed on the population at large, can be debated at length. There is, however, little argument over the massive economic costs for the country. The Reserve Bank of India has underlined that some of that damage to India's GDP is permanent. This can be linked to businesses shutting shop for good, labourers migrating home (with many choosing not to return) and consumers turning increasingly reluctant. The rebuilding effort remains a work in progress, although record tax collections would suggest that all is well. Personal consumption and employment-driving contact-intensive sectors remain below pre-pandemic levels, even as other macro metrics have surpassed pre-COVID performance. Just as the virus appeared to be ebbing, triggering hopes of a revival in consumer confidence, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has thrown up fresh challenges, including high commodity and crude oil prices.

Health-care costs are considered a key factor for pushing several middle- and lower-income households below the poverty line, while high inflation affects all economic actors. The Russia-Ukraine situation has not only catapulted gas, oil and coal prices higher but also fertilizers, wheat, corn, and seed oil. A section of farmers growing crops such as wheat may gain, but inflation in essential items such as food and transport, will impact the poor the most. For now, India's oil marketing companies, who the Government has argued determine the retail prices of fuel, have shown extreme benevolence in holding rates at November 2021 levels and this may persist till Parliament's current session ends. This is, however, not fiscally sustainable, just as the Finance Ministry has argued that high global commodity prices are not. A prolonged conflict in Europe could tip the global economy into recession, even as monetary policy missteps and social risks associated with high inflation, could dampen growth, Moody's Investors Service warned last week. On the other hand, the Government's robust direct tax collections that have surpassed even revised estimates by ₹1.13 lakh crore, give it room to not just push forward the LIC share sale till market volatility subsides but also slash fuel taxes further, curb other inflationary pressures and expand the COVID-19 booster shots coverage. Unless people get more certainty about the pandemic's end-game, and have some money in their hands, it would be difficult to spur consumption enough to reach the necessary next stage of the recovery — a revival in private investments.

NPPA

Explained | What is the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority's role in fixing drug prices? (The Hindu:20220321)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/explained-what-is-the-national-pharmaceutical-pricing-authoritys-role-in-fixing-drug-prices/article65240274.ece>

Why is the pharma lobby seeking a 10% increase for scheduled drugs? How will it impact consumers?

The story so far: Consumers may have to pay more for medicines and medical devices if the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) allows a price hike of over 10% in the

drugs and devices listed under the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), this coming month. The escalation which is

WTO nod

Explained | Will a limited and conditional WTO nod to remove intellectual property rights on (The Hindu:20220321)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/will-a-limited-and-conditional-wto-nod-to-remove-intellectual-property-rights-on-the-use-of-covid-19-vaccines-help/article65240436.ece>

What are some of the hurdles in the draft agreement? What do India's pharmaceutical companies say?

The story so far: At the World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations, a consensus is in sight on a pending proposal championed by India and South Africa in 2020 that sought to remove intellectual property rights restrictions on the use of COVID-19 vaccines, drugs and diagnostic devices. The reprieve, however, will come with certain conditions, which are still under discussion.

COVID-19 cases

India adds 1,761 COVID-19 cases, lowest single-day rise in nearly two years (The Hindu:20220321)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/covid/article65242919.ece>

The death toll climbed to 5,16,479 with 127 fresh fatalities India on Sunday recorded 1,761 fresh coronavirus infections, the lowest in around 688 days, that took its tally to 4,30,07,841, while the active cases declined further to 26,240, according to Union Health Ministry data.

The death toll climbed to 5,16,479 with 127 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8.00 a.m. stated.

Oral COVID-19 antiviral drug

19 firms in India to make Pfizer's oral COVID-19 antiviral drug(The Hindu:20220321)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/19-firms-in-india-to-make-pfizers-oral-covid-19-antiviral-drug/article65235579.ece>

They have signed sublicense agreements with United Nations-backed Medicines Patent Pool
Nineteen drugmakers in India have signed sublicense agreements with the United Nations-backed Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) to manufacture the generic version of Pfizer's oral COVID-19 antiviral nirmatrelvir, which is to be used in combination with ritonavir.

They are among the 35 companies across 12 countries to have entered into such agreements with MPP for manufacturing and supplying to 95 low and middle

Medical devices

Need to standardise methodology to evaluate medical devices: Niti Aayog member V.K. Paul(The Hindu:20220321)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/need-to-standardise-methodology-to-evaluate-medical-devices-niti-aayog-member-vk-paul/article65233765.ece>

Niti Aayog member Dr. V.K. Paul has stressed on the need to standardise the methodology for evaluating innovative medical devices.

Dr. Paul was in Maharashtra's Pune city on March 15 to inaugurate a new research & development facility of a company providing medical device solutions.

Medical Education

Delhi HC worried over lack of ‘quality, affordable’ medical colleges in country (The Hindu:20220321)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/delhi-hc-worried-over-lack-of-quality-affordable-medical-colleges-in-country/article65231039.ece>

Court decision comes while allowing an institute to increase seats in postgraduate and undergraduate courses

The Delhi High Court has raised concern over the lack of adequate number of medical institutions providing quality affordable education in the country. It said due to lack of colleges, thousands of students are compelled to pursue their studies abroad.

“This reality has especially become a cause for concern at a time when due to the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, several thousand Indian medical

Global pandemic treaty

Watch | What is global pandemic treaty? (The Hindu:20220321)

A video on World Health Organisation’s pandemic treaty

In December 2021, the World Health Assembly agreed to start a global process to draft the pandemic treaty. The Health Assembly adopted a decision titled “The World Together” at its second special session since it was founded in 1948.

As per the decision, the health organisation established an intergovernmental negotiating body to draft a pandemic treaty.

Detox diet

**Expert recommends detox diet to shed winter weight before summer
A detoxification can benefit your body in a variety of ways, including boosting metabolism, strengthening immune system, promoting healthier skin and a clearer mind (The Indian Express:20220321)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/detox-body-diet-meal-chart-plan-summer-healthy-eating-7812310/>

detox diet, detox diet for summer, detox diet to shed winter weight, healthy eating, healthy meals, healthy diet, diet chart, diet plan, weight loss, immunity, indian express news Do you follow a detox diet? Here's what you need to know. (Photo: Getty/Thinkstock)

Winters are all about survival. When the temperature drops dramatically, people tend to become lazy and alter their diet so as to suit the weather and keep themselves warm and fed. Daily activities reduce, too, with the urge to stay under the covers.

Nutritionist Sapna Jaysingh Patel, the founder of Health Before Wealth, says the consumption of fat-laden food can damage the body in the long run, because these foods are hard on the body and never get properly digested, leading to stomach aches, bloating, or constipation.

ALSO READ | Guide to eat right: Common myths about food combining that you should know
“Also, such an intake lowers body activity, making it heavy, resulting in low energy. Since summers are when generally the hot weather drains the body’s energy, it is imperative that it goes through a winter detoxification process to take out the excess accumulation of food,” she says.

weight loss, how to lose weight, weight loss tips Following a detox plan for a week alone won’t be enough. For a long-lasting impact, it is essential to adopt a holistic lifestyle that impacts the body in a healthy way.

According to Patel, it can benefit our body in a variety of ways, including boosting our metabolism, strengthening our immune system, promoting healthier skin and a clearer mind.

Fitness

**Weekend fitness: Practice these five easy exercises for toned arms
Check out these exercises, as suggested by Ayurvedic expert and yoga instructor Dr Noopur Rohatgi (The Indian Express:20220321)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/fitness/weekend-fitness-5-easy-exercises-for-toned-arms-7793319/>

Each exercise should be done in 30 repetitions daily. Gradually increase the number of reps every week. (Source: Representative image/Pexels)

If you're a working professional with a tight schedule, a homemaker with tons of chores and responsibilities or a student looking to have a toned upper body, you've come to the right place.

Amidst the hustle and bustle of everyday life, it becomes difficult to have a regular exercise regime. While some prefer to hit the gym, others prefer the calmness that yoga brings with it.

ALSO READ |5 simple yoga poses that are highly beneficial if practised daily

As such, if you want to achieve toned arms and shoulders, you may want to check out these five exercises as suggested by Ayurvedic expert and yoga instructor Dr Noopur Rohatgi.

“Each exercise should be done in 30 repetitions daily. Gradually increase the number of reps every week,” she advised in her post.

While regular physical activity is recommended for people of all ages, most don't know a place where they can start from. Beginning with easy-to-do exercises may keep you motivated as well as keep you on the right track.

Dr Rohatgi advised that these exercises “should always be accompanied with other cardio exercises and calorie deficit nutritious diet for ultimate results.”

The five easy exercises for toned arms and shoulders, as suggested by Dr Rohatgi are mentioned below.

Arm Pulses

Designed to target the shoulders, triceps and biceps, arm pulses are highly recommended to tone down the arms. To do this exercise, lift your arms and keep your elbows and upper arms tight by your side. Proceed to move your arms in short pulses.

Citrus Food

Here's simple way to clean and cut a pomelo; know the many benefits of this citrus fruit

Chef Saransh Goila took to Instagram to show us how to cut this large citrus food — minus the mess! (The Indian Express:20220321)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/food-wine/how-to-easily-clean-a-pomelo-know-benefits-7767788/>

Relished during the winter season, pomelos are a delicious, citrus-y fruit. (Representative Image/Pexels)

Pomelos, a large variety of citrus fruit, is popularly relished across the country. This tangy, fibrous and refreshing fruit is related to the sweeter grapefruit and is known for its high vitamin C and antioxidant properties.

ALSO READ |Bhagyashree loves eating this delicious winter fruit; shares the many healthy benefits

Referred to as chakotra in Uttarakhand, batabi lebu in West Bengal and robab tenga in Assam, the fruit tastes delicious on its own or when added to salads. Recently, Chef Saransh Goila took to Instagram to share how to clean and cut a pomelo without getting your kitchen surface messy.

“Make a lovely salad with it ya phir Uttarakhand style Chakotra ka Saan which is also a desi salad,” he captioned the post.

Take a look.

Here's how to neatly cut a pomelo, according to Chef Saransh Goila.

*Take a pomelo and slice off both ends uniformly.

*Make gashes in the pomelo's peel in the shape of a triangle. Carefully tear off slices of the peel as it will open up like flower petals.

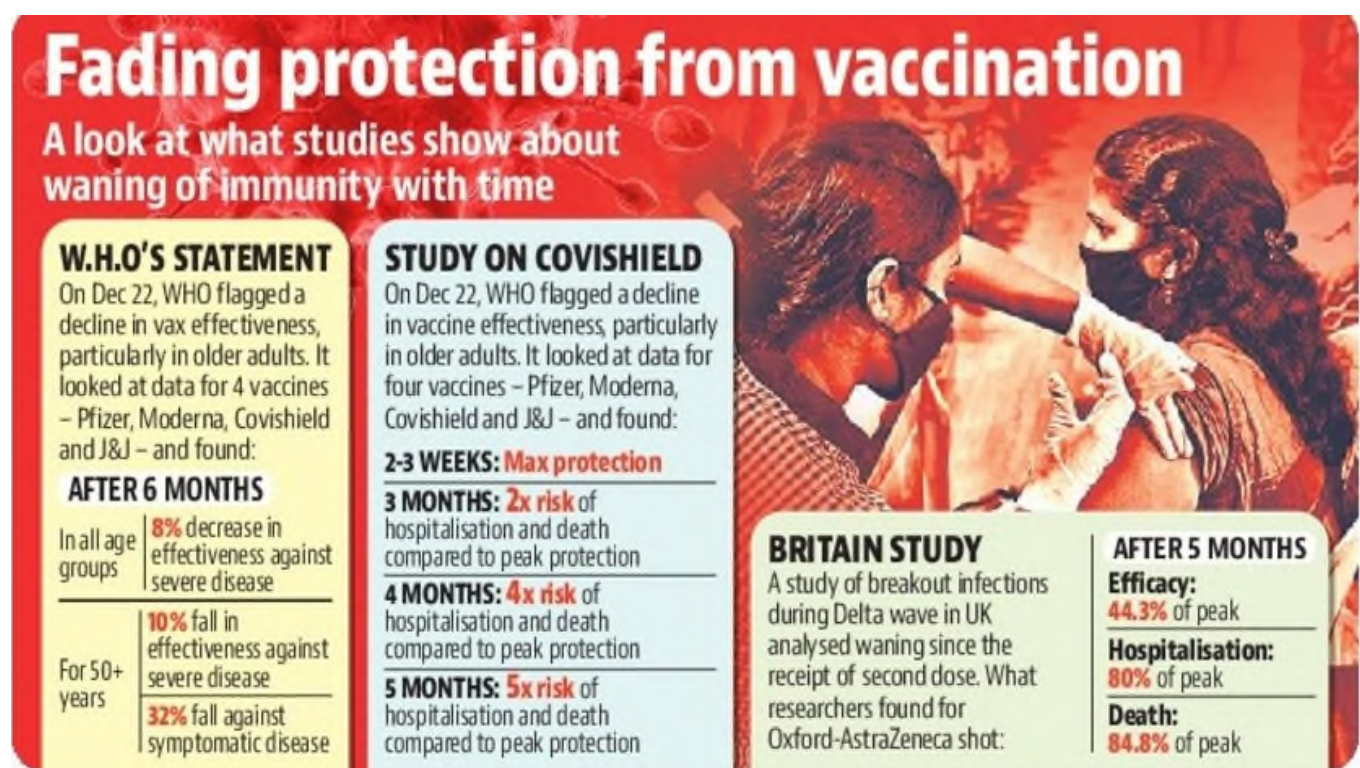
*Slice the remainder of the white peel and rind from the fruit with a sharp knife. You'll be able to see the bright flesh of the fruit.

*Open the segments of the pomelo with your hands and use them as required.

Vaccination

Waning immunity may require wider boosters Large section of those vaccinated got their last dose more than 6 months ago, leading to protection tapering (The Hindustan Times:20220321)

<https://epaper.hindustantimes.com/Home/ArticleView>



A little over a third (36%) of all Indians above the age of 45 received their second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine at least six months ago – a time threshold that many studies say causes significant waning of immunity – pointing to the need for the country to make available booster shots to this population cohort, and progressively to everyone over 18 years of age. Currently, only those over 60 years are eligible for boosters in India.

Several global studies, both in laboratory setting as well as those that looked at real-world data, have shown that vaccine effectiveness against severe Covid-19 starts decreasing after a certain time period, widely believed by experts to be around four to six months after people were administered the second dose of the vaccine.

Indeed, one theory for the surge in infections, including those caused by a second Omicron variant-driven wave in some Western countries, is waning immunity.

Of India's estimated 345 million adults above the age of 45 years, according to population projections for 2021 by the Census of India, 122.8 million had received both shots of the vaccine by September 20, 2021. This means that more than a third had received both shots.

In the weeks that followed, this number saw a massive increase as vaccination in this category picked up pace. By October 20, around 43% of Indians above 45 years were doubly vaccinated, while a little over half (53%) of this population group were fully vaccinated four months ago, as on November 20, 2021.

These numbers mean that in around eight weeks' time, more than half of all Indians above 45 years of age will have crossed the six-month threshold of their second shot.

Among the studies on waning immunity are those that looked at the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, which is manufactured in India under the brand name Covishield, and is currently responsible for around nine out of 10 shots administered in the country.

Since the contraction of India's third wave, new Covid-19 cases in the country right now are the lowest since the early days of the outbreak more than 22 months ago.

Of India's total eligible population, 80.9% have received two shots of the vaccine, while another 14.5% have been administered a single shot.

Experts said that while the third Omicron wave may have bought India some time in terms of natural immunity among the masses, the sooner the issue of wider booster coverage is dealt with, the better.

What global studies say

The World Health Organization (WHO), based on a meta-regression analysis of four of its vaccines granted emergency use authorisation (EUL) with the most data – Pfizer-BioNTech's Comirnaty, Moderna's Spikevax, Astrazeneca's Covishield/Vaxzevria, and Johnson & Johnson's Ad26.COV2.S – observed that there was a considerable decline in immunity, particularly among older people.

“Emerging data consistently show a decline in vaccine effectiveness against SARS-CoV2 infection and COVID-19 with time since vaccination, and more significant decline in older adults,” the United Nations health agency said in a statement on December 22.

Vaccine effectiveness against severe Covid-19 decreased by about 8% over a period of six months in all age groups, the analysis showed.

But the more alarming finding was that in adults above 50, protection against severe disease decreased by about 10% in the same period, and protection fell by 32% against symptomatic disease.

Importantly, this study was released by WHO before the emergence of Omicron and its sub-variants, which are much more infectious than other variants.

Another study by University of Edinburgh published in the Lancet journal gives us a much clearer understanding of immunity waning in Covishield. It looked real-world data from 44 million shot recipients – 42 million in Brazil and 2 million in Scotland.

Researchers started seeing a visible drop in immunity around three months after people were given their second shot.

Compared with two weeks after receiving a second dose, there was a fourfold rise in the chance of death and hospitalisation four months from the second dose, which became a fivefold increase in five months.

In the Indian context, the four-month period applies to the nearly 185 million people, or 53% of those above 45 years, while the five-month period applies to nearly 150 million people, or 43% of those above 45 years.

“Vaccines have been a key tool in fighting the pandemic, but waning in their effectiveness has been a concern for a while. By identifying when waning first starts to occur in the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, it should be possible for governments to design booster programmes that can ensure maximum protection is maintained,” Aziz Sheikh, director of the University of Edinburgh’s Usher Institute and the study’s lead author, said in a statement.

“Our work highlights the importance of getting boosters, even if you’ve had two doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, as soon as you are able to,” added Vittal Katikireddi of the University of Glasgow, one of the co-authors of the study.

A third study in New England Journal of Medicine showed that vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic Covid-19 fell to 44.3% by the five-month point from the second dose for Covishield. Beyond the five-month point, effectiveness against hospitalisation fell to 80%, while against death to around 85%. Those over 40 and with underlying medical conditions saw a greater waning, according to this study.

Several factors must be taken into account when expanding booster ambit, such as coverage of all vulnerable groups, and the impact the Omicron wave would have had on the immunity levels, experts said.

“We have obviously prioritised for now the population that is most vulnerable to the virus – the elderly, health care and front line workers. There are several aspects of the strategy that the government is trying to look at right now – from having vaccine from multiple manufacturers made available to covering children,” said Dr Vikas Maurya, director, pulmonology, Fortis Healthcare.

“I am certain they want to cover as this group (45 years and above) as quickly as possible. After these categories are well-placed, I definitely see boosters being expanded to the vulnerable people in the 45+ category as well in a month or two,” Dr Maurya said.

“There are also people predicting that a new wave may be on the horizon, even though it may not happen, in which case it would be best to cover as many vulnerable people with boosters as possible,” Dr Maurya said.

India’s third wave of infections caused by the Omicron variant may have bought India limited amount of grace time, he said.

“We also need to understand that the country just saw a massive Omicron wave in which many people exposed to the virus. In that sense, from what we’ve observed, that should buy them 3-4 months of immunity,” he added. “This would be a factor that would be in the minds of government experts when they’re planning out the booster strategy.”

Medicine (Dainik Bhasker:20220321)

<https://epaper.bhaskar.com/detail/965780/95607423421/rajasthan/21032022/14/image/>

भास्कर ब्रेकिंग • सरकार ने 6 फार्मासिस्ट को राजकीय विश्लेषक नोटिफाई किया खराब दवाएं बीमार नहीं करेंगी; 12 महीने में नहीं, 30 दिन में मिलेगी सैंपल की जांच रिपोर्ट

संदीप शर्मा | जयपुर

दवाओं के सैंपल की जांच रिपोर्ट 30 दिन में मिल जाएगी। अभी रिपोर्ट 1 में आती है। इस परेशानी से निपटने के लिए ड्रग विभाग की मांग पर सरकार ने राजकीय विश्लेषक लगाने की मंजूरी दे दी है। साथ ही 6 फार्मासिस्ट को राजकीय विश्लेषक के रूप में नोटिफाई कर दिया गया है। यानी ये सभी दवाइयों की टेस्टिंग और रिपोर्ट जारी करने के लिए अधिकृत हो जाएंगे। अभी तक इस काम के लिए केवल दो जने ही अधिकृत थे और इस वजह से काम की गति काफी धीमी थी।

अभी छह हजार दवाओं की तो रिपोर्ट आनी बाकी है

फिलहाल, 6000 सैंपल की रिपोर्ट आनी बाकी है। रिपोर्ट नहीं आने से इनमें से अमानक दवाएं बिक रही हैं। ड्रग विभाग का दावा है 4-5 माह में पेंडेंसी खत्म हो जाएगी। ऐसे में जिन भी दवाओं में कम साल्ट होगा, अमानक होंगी, वे बिकने से पहले बाजार से हटा दी जाएंगी। हर महीने 500 दवाइयों की सैंपलिंग होती है लेकिन इनकी रिपोर्ट समय पर नहीं आती। ऐसे में हर महीने की सैंपलिंग की वेंटिंग बढ़ती जाती है। नियमों के तहत पहले उनकी ही रिपोर्ट दी जाती है, जिनकी सैंपलिंग पहले की जाती है।

दवा ही बीमार; 6 माह में सुगर, हार्ट व ब्लड प्रेशर की 50 लाख घटिया टैबलेट खा चुके रोगी

भास्कर ने उठाया था मुद्दा।

सरकार ने फार्मासिस्ट लगाए हैं, अब पेंडेंसी तो खत्म होगी ही सभी कार्यों में तेजी आएगी। वहीं अमानक दवाओं की रिपोर्ट आते ही बाजार में बिकने पर रोकना प्राथमिकता है, उसे देखते हुए ही अन्य कई कदम उठाए गए हैं।

-अजय फाटक, ड्रग कंट्रोलर

ईमिन्न का नहीं, खुद का मेल आईडी देना जरूरी

दवा के अमानक आते ही दवा विक्रेता व निर्माताओं को विभाग ईमेल से सूचना दे रहा है। अभी कई दवा विक्रेताओं ने ईमिन्न के जरिए आवेदन किए हैं, ऐसे में ईमेल आईडी से विक्रेता को जानकारी नहीं मिल पाती। ड्रग विभाग ने विक्रेताओं को निर्देश दिए हैं कि अपनी मेल आईडी अपडेट कराएं। जिन्होंने ऑनलाइन लाइसेंस नहीं कराए हैं, वे 15 अप्रैल तक करा लें, अन्यथा उनके नवीनीकरण नहीं किए जाएंगे।

Third Wave (Dainik Bhasker:20220321)

<https://epaper.bhaskar.com/detail/965810/95905977954/rajasthan/21032022/14/image/>

भास्कर **Explainer**

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भारत में चौथी लहर की आशंका बेहद कम, क्योंकि बड़ी आबादी में एंटीबॉडी है

पवन कुमार. नई दिल्ली। दक्षिण कोरिया और चीन समेत 15 एशियाई देशों में कोरोना के नए मरीज बढ़ रहे हैं। अमेरिकी देशों में भी मरीज बढ़ने लगे हैं। ऐसे में भारत में मैथेमैटिकल एनलिसिस होने लगे हैं कि चौथी लहर अब आएगी-तब आएगी... वगैरह-वगैरह। इस आशंका को लेकर भास्कर ने देश के तीन प्रमुख वैज्ञानिकों से बात की। बातचीत के प्रमुख अंश...

■ **तथा संक्रमण की चौथी लहर आ रही है?**

अभी चौथी लहर की आशंका बहुत कम है। क्योंकि, भारत में इसे रोकने के लिए दो मजबूत बैरियर तैयार हो चुके हैं। पहला बैरियर है नेचुरल इम्युनिटी, जो इंसान के शरीर में संक्रमित होने के बाद पैदा होती है। सीरो सर्वे कहते हैं कि देश की 90% आबादी संक्रमित हो चुकी है। यानी उनमें एंटीबॉडी है। संक्रमित होने के बाद 6 से 12 महीने तक दोबारा संक्रमण की आशंका बेहद कम रहती है। दूसरा अहम बैरियर है वैक्सीनेशन। भारत में 18 साल से ज्यादा की 95% आबादी को वैक्सीन के दोनों डोज लग चुकी हैं। इसलिए हमें खतरा कम है।

■ **वैक्सीनेशन तो द. कोरिया में भी हो चुका, वहां रोज 4 लाख से ज्यादा केस कैसे आ रहे?** दक्षिण कोरिया, चीन, हॉन्गकॉन्ग आदि में संक्रमण तेजी से फैल रहा है। इसकी वजह ओमिक्रॉन वैरिएंट है, जो भारत में संक्रमण की तीसरी लहर ला चुका है। गौर करने वाली बात यह है कि चीन और दक्षिण कोरिया में अभी तक ज्यादातर

है कि कोरोना अभी गया नहीं है। सिर्फ उसका प्रसार सीमित हुआ है। दुनिया के किसी भी कोने में वायरस होता है तो पूरी दुनिया के लिए खतरा बना रहता है। क्योंकि, वायरस लगातार म्यूटेट होता है। म्यूटेशन हमेशा मरीज के शरीर में होता है। जब तक वायरस को संक्रमित करने के लिए नए शरीर मिलते रहेंगे, म्यूटेशन का खतरा बना रहेगा। लेकिन, भारत में इसकी आशंका भी अभी कम है।

■ **अगर दुनिया में कोई नया वैरिएंट आया तो?** तो फिर पूरी दुनिया में संक्रमण की नई लहर आ सकती है। जैसा कि हम डेल्टा और ओमिक्रॉन की वजह से देख चुके हैं।

■ **दुनिया में अभी नए स्ट्रेन 'बीए.2' से कोरोना फैल रहा है। इससे भारत पर क्या असर?**

भारत में ओमिक्रॉन ने करीब-करीब सभी लोगों को शिकार बनाया। 'बीए.2' स्ट्रेन ओमिक्रॉन का ही नया स्वरूप है। भारत में तीसरी लहर के दौरान 'बीए.2' मिलता रहा है, इसलिए इसकी वजह से भारत में चौथी लहर नहीं आ सकती।

■ **क्या भारत में नए कोरोनावायरस के**