



DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

LEADING HEALTH, POPULATION AND FAMILY WELFARE STORIES OF THE DAY
Tuesday 20220222

Genetic testing - heart disease

Can genetic testing help evaluate risk of heart disease (The Tribune: 20220222)

If proven effective in clinical trials, this form of genetic testing may be adopted globally to prevent heart disease - the number one killer in the world

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/can-genetic-testing-help-evaluate-risk-of-heart-disease-371829>

US researchers have launched a clinical trial in which genetic testing is used to identify men and women at risk of developing heart disease based on the makeup of their DNA.

If proven effective in clinical trials, this form of genetic testing may be adopted globally to prevent heart disease - the number one killer in the world.

"This should be the last century of heart disease," said Robert Roberts, Medical Director of Cardiovascular Genomics for Dignity Health hospital in Arizona.

Throughout the duration of the study, the researchers will collect DNA samples from approximately 2,000 men and women aged between 40 and 60 with no known history of heart disease.

The DNA samples will then be analysed to determine if the participants have genetic markers known to cause heart disease.

Once the DNA genotyping is completed, the team at Dignity will evaluate each participant's genetic markers to determine if they have a low, medium or high chance of developing heart disease.

Other health and lifestyle factors will also be considered when determining the participants' risk of heart disease. These include hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol and whether the participant smokes or is physically active, among others.

"I am hopeful that through the results of this study we will be able to save even more lives in the future by implementing genetic testing for early prevention of coronary artery disease as routine clinical application. This approach would represent a paradigm shift in the prevention of this disease," Roberts said.

Previously, studies have found strong DNA links to heart attack.

Research has shown that high cholesterol levels from birth can be caused by a common genetic condition called familial hypercholesterolemia (FH). It can lead to a high risk of coronary heart disease from an early age, and some estimates suggest that by the age of 70, one in every two patients with FH would have had a coronary heart disease event.

In a paper published in the European Heart Journal, research from Monash University in Australia, stated that DNA testing for FH in early adulthood via the public healthcare system could identify thousands more people with FH early, who could then be provided access to prevention that would save lives. IANS



Vitamins

Vitamins cannot reduce death risk from Covid-19, say researchers (The Tribune: 20220222)

While treatment with vitamin D may be associated with lower rates of intubation and shorter hospital stays, researchers states that more rigorous study is needed to validate that finding

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/vitamins-cannot-reduce-death-risk-from-covid-19-say-researchers-371536>

In view of several studies claiming efficacy of vitamins against Covid-19, a new research proves that taking immune-boosting supplements such as vitamin C, D and zinc do not lessen your chance of dying from the virus.

While these supplements have also been dubbed as an alternative against proven vaccines, researchers at The University of Toledo in Ohio, the US, said there's been little evidence.

"A lot of people have this misconception that if you load up on zinc, vitamin D or C, it can help the clinical outcome of Covid-19," said Dr. Azizullah Beran, an internal medicine resident at the University's College of Medicine and Life Sciences.

"That hasn't been shown to be true," Beran added.

In the study, published in the journal Clinical Nutrition ESPEN, the team reviewed 26 peer-reviewed studies from around the globe that included more than 5,600 hospitalised Covid patients.

The analysis found no reduction in mortality for those being treated with vitamin D, C or zinc compared to patients who did not receive one of these three supplements.

While treatment with vitamin D may be associated with lower rates of intubation and shorter hospital stays, the researchers stated that more rigorous study is needed to validate that finding.

Vitamin C and zinc were not associated with shorter hospital stays or lowering the chance of a patient being put on a ventilator.

The researchers also analysed a smaller subset of individuals who had been taking vitamin D prior to contracting the virus and found no significant difference in the mortality rate.

However, they cautioned that the study should not be interpreted as saying vitamin and mineral supplements are bad or should be avoided, but rather made it clear that they are not effective at preventing deaths due to Covid.

At the same time, they also noted that it's possible that some Covid patients who are malnourished or otherwise deficient in micronutrients may benefit from taking supplements,

but that's because their bodies already lack essential nutrients - not because vitamin D or vitamin C are effective against the virus.

"What we're saying is this: If you don't medically need these supplements, don't take them thinking they're protective against Covid," Beran said. "They're not going to prevent you from getting it and they're not going to prevent you from dying."

Antibiotics

**Antibiotics after birth affects gut microbes of babies
Under current guidelines, antibiotics directed at a wide range of bacteria are prescribed to four to 10 per cent of all newborns for suspected infections
(The Tribune: 20220222)**

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/health/antibiotics-after-birth-affects-gut-microbes-of-babies-371320>

Treating babies with antibiotics in the first week of life is linked to a decrease in healthy bacteria necessary, among others, to digest milk and an increase in antimicrobial resistance, research suggests.

According to experts, clinicians should consider using antibiotics in a way that causes least harm to the newborns microbiome – the community of microbes that live in our body.

Under current guidelines, antibiotics directed at a wide range of bacteria are prescribed to four to 10 per cent of all newborns for suspected infections.

However, experts say that in most cases the antibiotics are prescribed unnecessarily as only a small proportion of those who receive the drugs are eventually diagnosed with an infection.

This overprescription is to ensure early treatment for those who are ultimately found to have an infection as any delay may quickly become life-threatening.

The study, published in Nature Communications, found a change in 251 of 695 different bacteria after treatment, changing the balance between good and bad bacteria in favour of more potentially harmful microbes.

Though gradually recovering over time, the changes to the microbiome and to antimicrobial resistance genes persisted for at least 12 months and did not improve with breastfeeding, which is known to help a baby's immune system.

"We were surprised with the magnitude and duration of the effects of broad spectrum antibiotics on the infants' microbiome when compared to effects of those same antibiotics on adults' microbiota," said lead author Professor Debby Bogaert, Chair of Paediatric Medicine at the University of Edinburgh.

"This is likely because the antibiotic treatment is given at a time that infants have just received their first microbes from their mother and have not yet developed a resilient microbiome," Bogaert added.

Researchers conducted a clinical trial involving 227 babies to analyse how antibiotics affect a newborn's microbiome.

The samples were analysed for the microbes that made up their newly forming microbiome and for bacterial genes related to antimicrobial resistance.

For newborns that had been prescribed antibiotics, there was found to be a significant decrease in the levels of different Bifidobacterium species compared with babies who had no antibiotic treatment.

These microbes aid in the digestion of human breast milk and promote gut health, while also supporting the immune defence against infection.

The team also found an increase in potentially disease-causing bacteria and in the number and abundance of genes related to antimicrobial resistance in the group that received antibiotics.

Further, of the three antibiotic treatment regimens tested, the combination of penicillin and gentamicin, was found to have the least detrimental effect on a baby's gut microbiome and the number of antimicrobial resistance genes that emerge. IANS

Covovax vaccine

Serum Institute seeks EUA for its Covovax vaccine for 12-17 years age group (The Tribune: 20220222)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/serum-institute-seeks-eua-for-its-covovax-vaccine-for-12-17-years-age-group-371831>

Drugs Controller General of India has already approved Covovax for restricted use in emergency situations in adults on December 28

Serum Institute seeks EUA for its Covovax vaccine for 12-17 years age group
Photo for representation. — iStock

Serum Institute of India has sought emergency use authorisation from India's drug regulator for its Covid-19 vaccine Covovax for the 12 to 17 year age group, official sources said on Monday.

The government has not yet decided on vaccinating those aged below 15.

The Health Ministry had recently said the additional need for vaccination and inclusion of population for inoculation is examined constantly.

In the application for emergency use authorisation (EUA) for the 12-17 year age group, Prakash Kumar Singh, Director, Government and Regulatory Affairs at SII, is learnt to have stated that data from two studies on about 2,707 individuals aged 12 to 17 years show Covovax is highly efficacious, immunogenic, safe and well-tolerated in this age group.

“We are submitting our application along with documents for grant of permission for restricted use in emergency situation for Covovax vaccine in children aged 12 to 17 years in addition to approved age of individuals 18 years and older,” an official source quoted Singh as having said in the application.

This approval will not only be beneficial for the country but will also benefit the world, fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Making in India for the World', Singh is learnt to have said.

“In line with the philosophy of our CEO Dr Adar C Poonawalla, we are sure that Covovax will play an important role in protecting the children of our country and the world against COVID-19 and will keep our national flag flying high globally,” Singh stated.

The Drugs Controller General of India has already approved Covovax for restricted use in emergency situations in adults on December 28.

Covovax is manufactured by technology transfer from Novavax and is approved by the European Medicines Agency for conditional marketing authorisation.

It has been granted emergency use listing by the World Health Organisation on December 17, 2021.

India has been using Bharat Biotech's Covaxin to vaccinate adolescents between 15 and 18 years.

Covid infection

In Faridabad, Covid infection rate down 63% in two weeks (The Tribune: 20220222)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/in-faridabad-infection-rate-down-63-in-two-weeks-371729>

In Faridabad, Covid infection rate down 63% in two weeks
A teenager being vaccinated in Faridabad. File photo

The Covid curve in the district is on sharp decline. While the recovery rate is 128.77 per cent more than new cases in the past fortnight, both the hospitalisation and sample positivity rate have also slipped in this period in the district.

Revealing that fresh and active cases have reduced between 73 and 78.5 per cent in the past two weeks, a senior official of the Health Department said that the Covid curve has shown a remarkable improvement as around 2,846 patients have recovered against a total of 1,244 persons testing positive since February 6 in the district. Only one death has taken place in this period according to the officials concerned.

While the recovery rate is around 128.77 per cent, hospitalisation has also gone down from 56 to just 10 in this period which is 82.14 per cent down in 14 days.

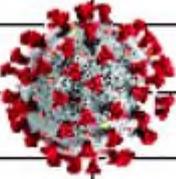
Civil Surgeon Dr Vinay Gupta said that the sample positivity rate (infection rate) has decreased by 63.47 per cent as it has slipped to 2.21 per cent from 6.05 per cent registered two weeks ago. This has improved the overall recovery percentage up from 97.95 per cent to 99.11 per cent in this period, he said, adding that only one death that has taken place in the current month has been on February 6.

The district recorded as many as 19 deaths in January. It is claimed that co-morbidities had been the prime factor behind casualties.

Dr Man Singh, Nodal Officer-Covid Vaccination, said with 103 per cent of the residents getting fully vaccinated (both doses) till date, the Health Department has achieved 125 per cent of the vaccination of the first dose of the vaccine already. Adding that 80 per cent of the youngsters (aged between 15 and 18 years) have also been given the first dose, he said the precaution (booster) dose percentage reached 38 per cent on Sunday. He said the focus of the department was to provide vaccination to youngsters by holding camps in educational institutions.

Meanwhile, the district reported 39 new cases and 84 recoveries today.

COVID METER

Cases		534
Recovered		705
Active		3,485
Deaths		3

DISTRICT-WISE COUNT

DISTRICT	+VE	DEATHS
Gurugram	194	2
Palwal	77	0
Faridabad	39	0
State Total	9,78,404	10,525

Lassa fever

Explained | What is Lassa fever and should you be worried? (The Hindu:20220222)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/explained-what-is-lassa-fever-and-should-you-be-worried/article65071901.ece>

Keeping homes free of rodents can drastically reduce the possibility of coming in contact with the virus

Keeping homes free of rodents can drastically reduce the possibility of coming in contact with the virus | Photo Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto

The UK Health Security Agency had confirmed a death due to Lassa fever on February 11. The story so far: One death out of the three confirmed cases of the viral Lassa fever in the United Kingdom has sparked concerns about the spread of the disease, even as the world continues to grapple with the Covid-19 pandemic. The U.K. Health Security Agency confirmed the death on February 11. The two initial cases were detected within the same family of East England that had travelled to West Africa.

What is Lassa fever?

The disease was discovered in 1969 in Nigeria's Lassa town. Two missionary nurses died after contracting the virus, although similar symptoms had been described since the 1950s.

The World Health Organisation defines Lassa fever as an animal-borne acute viral haemorrhagic fever caused by multimammate rats. Cases of the disease are mostly reported from Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, Togo and Nigeria in West Africa and the disease is largely endemic to the region. Thousands of cases of Lassa fever are reported from West Africa each year, with an annual casualty count averaging 5,000.

Eight cases of Lassa fever have been reported in the U.K. since 1980. The last two cases until now were reported in 2009.

In the U.S., only six cases of Lassa fever have been reported so far, and all of them were associated with travel to countries where the disease is endemic.

What causes the disease?

The primary cause of Lassa fever is exposure to the infected multimammate rats. Lassa virus spreads through faeces and urine of these rats. Exposure of food and household items to the virus is also considered a leading cause for the spread of the disease. The *Mastomys* rats are known for living in human settlements, thus increasing chances of exposure to the virus through food. The rodents also serve as a source of food themselves. The virus can also infect humans if air contaminated by the excretion of infected rats is inhaled.

Human-to-human transmission of the virus is also possible, although it is not known to spread through casual contact like hugging, shaking hands or sitting near an infected person. Chances of human transmission increase in healthcare settings in the absence of adequate control measures.

What are the symptoms of Lassa fever?

Symptoms of Lassa fever can take up to three weeks to show, although most cases exhibit mild symptoms and go undiagnosed. Exposure to Lassa virus can cause fever, fatigue, and headache. In severe cases, symptoms like haemorrhaging, facial swelling, low blood pressure, chest and back pain etc may also develop. Shocks, seizures, and coma have also been reported as symptoms of Lassa fever.

Deafness is a prominent symptom associated with Lassa fever. Around 25% of recovered patients exhibit deafness of varied levels, and hearing is partially restored in half the cases.

How is Lassa fever diagnosed and treated?

Clinical diagnosis of Lassa fever is challenging because of the similarity in symptoms with other diseases like Ebola, malaria, and typhoid fever. The most common method used to detect Lassa fever is enzyme-linked immunosorbent serologic assays (ELISA). Reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR), the most efficient test used to diagnose Covid-19, can also be used to detect infection by Lassa virus.

Antiviral drug ribavirin is often used to treat Lassa fever although the usage is not a licensed treatment. Other procedures used are supportive care including hydration, oxygenation, and

treatment of specific complications arising due to the disease. Preventive vaccines are currently under research and development.

Should you be worried?

In India, the International Health Division under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare lists Lassa fever as a disease of international significance. The country has not reported any cases of the disease so far.

Lassa fever has exhibited a low case-fatality rate so far, killing 1% of the infected patients. The disease is particularly severe in late pregnancy and results in maternal death and/or loss of the foetus in over 80% of the cases. However, most reported cases of the disease are mild.

How can the disease be prevented?

The best way to prevent contracting Lassa virus is to keep foods safe from rats in areas where the disease is prevalent. Setting up mouse traps, keeping homes free of rodents, and not consuming them as a food source can drastically reduce the possibility of coming in contact with the virus.

COVID - 19 vaccine

Echo chambers on social media spreading COVID - 19 vaccine misinformation: Study(The Hindu:20220222)

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/echo-chambers-on-social-media-spreading-covid-19-vaccine-misinformation-study/article65070405.ece>

Protesters voice their opposition to coronavirus vaccine mandates at Parliament in Wellington, New Zealand, on Feb. 12, 2022. A research shows that 22.5% of antivaxx-profiles' vaccine tweets link to YouTube videos.

Protesters voice their opposition to coronavirus vaccine mandates at Parliament in Wellington, New Zealand, on Feb. 12, 2022. A research shows that 22.5% of antivaxx-profiles' vaccine tweets link to YouTube videos. | Photo Credit: AP

The World Health Organisation has named vaccine hesitancy as one of the greatest threats to global health, says a study carried out on why people are hesitant to take COVID-19 jabs. Misinformation on social media contributes to vaccine hesitancy and creates a false image of benefits and disadvantages concerning the jabs, according to a study.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has named vaccine hesitancy as one of the greatest threats to global health.

"Where vaccine supporters often refer to news media and science sites when sharing knowledge about vaccines on Twitter, we can see that profiles belonging to anti-vaccine profiles far more often share links to YouTube videos and to sites that are known to spread

fake news and conspiracy theories," said Bjarke Monsted from Technical University of Denmark (DTU).

"Vaccine opponents' profiles often link to commercial sites that sell alternative health products. This is surprising given that vaccine hesitancy often stems from a fear of financial conflicts of interest," Mr. Monsted said.

Previous research, Mr. Monsted said, has shown that people who earn a fortune from the sale of alternative health products globally are responsible for vaccine misinformation.

The new study, recently published in the journal PLoS ONE, analysed some 60 billion tweets written before the COVID-19 pandemic to understand where the discussion about vaccines takes place on Twitter to better understand today's vaccine hesitancy on social media.

Using newly developed methods in the area of artificial intelligence (AI) called 'deep learning and natural language processing', Mr. Monsted and Professor Sune Lehmann from DTU taught a computer to identify which views on vaccines were expressed in a given tweet.

They identified the users who consistently expressed strong views in favour of (provaax) or against vaccines (antivaax) and from which sources the profiles shared their vaccine information.

The finding shows that 22.5% of antivaax-profiles' vaccine tweets link to YouTube videos, the researchers said.

They then grouped the sources into five categories: Sites known for sharing pseudoscience and conspiracy theories, news sites, social media, YouTube, and commercial sites relating to medicine and health.

The study confirms the echo chamber effect, making it hard for vaccine advocates and opponents to encounter each other's views on the internet -- because social media algorithms ensure that people interact with others whose opinions align with their own.

"We discovered that the sources of information, which people are exposed to in their social networks, depend heavily on their own attitudes towards vaccines," said Mr. Monsted.

"The more resistance to vaccines a user expressed, the further from the norm was the media picture they were exposed to from their circle of friends," the researcher said.

The researchers noted that when it comes to avoiding medical misinformation, the responsibility lies not just with the tech giants but also with media outlets.

Mr. Lehmann hopes that the novel method can provide a greater understanding of the vaccine discussion during the pandemic and in the future.

"Our research covers the period before COVID-19. And there is no doubt that vaccines have become a talking point in a whole new way in the last two years," Mr. Lehmann added.

WHO

WHO: New COVID cases drop by 19% globally, deaths stable (The Hindu:20220222)

A teenager receives a dose of Sputnik M (Gam-COVID-Vac-M) vaccine against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at a clinic in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia

A teenager receives a dose of Sputnik M (Gam-COVID-Vac-M) vaccine against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at a clinic in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia | Photo Credit: Reuters

WHO said that all other coronavirus variants, including alpha, beta and delta, continue to decline globally as omicron crowds them out

The number of new coronavirus cases globally fell by 19% in the last week while the number of deaths remained stable, according to the World Health Organization.

The U.N. health agency said late Tuesday in its weekly report on the pandemic that just over 16 million new COVID-19 infections and about 75,000 deaths were reported worldwide last week.

The Western Pacific was the only region to report a rise in new weekly cases, an increase of about 19%, Southeast Asia reported a decrease of about 37%, the biggest drop globally. The number of deaths rose by 38% in the Middle East and by about one-third in the Western Pacific.

The biggest number of new COVID-19 cases was seen in Russia. Cases there and elsewhere in Eastern Europe doubled in recent weeks, driven by a surge of the hugely infectious omicron variant.

WHO said that all other coronavirus variants, including alpha, beta and delta, continue to decline globally as omicron crowds them out. Among the more than 400,000 COVID-19 virus sequences uploaded to the world's biggest virus database in the last week, more than 98% were omicron.

WHO said the BA.2 version of omicron appears to be “steadily increasing” and its prevalence has risen in South Africa, Denmark, the U.K. and other countries.

Health officials have noted, however, that omicron causes milder disease than previous COVID-19 variants and in countries with high vaccination rates, hospitalization and death rates have not increased substantially, even with omicron's spread.

WHO's Africa director, Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, said last week there was “light at the end of the tunnel” for the continent and that even despite low vaccination rates, Africa was transitioning from the acute pandemic phase of COVID-19.

That optimism contrasts sharply with warnings from WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who has said repeatedly the pandemic is not over and is premature for countries to think that the end might be imminent.

India logs 16,051 Covid cases, 206 fatalities in last 24 hours

Daily count below 1 lakh for 15th day on trot, positivity 1.93%

SANJAY KAW
NEW DELHI, FEB. 21

The Drugs Controller General of India on Monday gave an emergency use approval to Hyderabad-based pharmaceutical company Biological E's Covid-19 vaccine Corbevax for children aged 12-18 years.

Corbevax is India's third homegrown vaccine approved for use in children aged 12 and above. The other two vaccines which have got nod for emergency use for children in this age group are Zydus Cadila's DNA shot ZyCoV-D and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.

The expected cost of Corbevax is Rs 145, excluding taxes. It is to be administered through an intramuscular route with two doses scheduled 28 days apart and has to be stored at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius temperature. It is the country's first indigenously developed RBD protein sub-unit vaccine against Covid-19.

The DCGI had approved the vaccine for restricted use in adults on December 28 last year.

India has, so far, vaccinated more than 76 million children aged 15-18 against the Coronavirus disease, mainly using Covaxin. The approval for EUA to Corbevax is likely to ramp up the government's ongoing drive to vaccinate children between 15 and 18 years of age, and later for those between 12 and 14 years of age.

The approval for Corbevax comes at a time when schools across the country are opening up as Covid-19 cases are witnessing a considerable decline.

The daily count of Covid-19 cases in the country has remained below one lakh for 15 consecutive days. India logged 16,051 new coronavirus infections and 206 fatalities in the last 24 hours. The number of active cases has gone down to 2,02,131, which comprise 0.47 per cent of the total infections,

while the national recovery rate has further improved to 98.33 per cent. The daily positivity rate has been recorded at 1.93 per cent while the weekly positivity rate stands at 2.12 per cent.

Corbevax had earlier received an EUA from the DCGI's Subject Expert Committee (SEC) for the 12 to 18 age group, subject to certain conditions. The EUA was recommended after reviewing the safety and immunogenicity data of the clinical study of Corbevax in children and adolescents.

National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) chief Dr N K Arora had said that the vaccine was safe and offered good immunogenicity and higher antibody levels as compared to some other vector vaccines.

Serum Institute of India has also sought emergency use authorisation from India's drug regulator for its Covid-19 vaccine Covovax for the 12 to 17 year age group.

Living With Covid (The Asian Age:20220222)

<http://onlinepaper.asianage.com/articledetailpage.aspx?id=16182998>

'Living with Covid': Let's not follow UK's example

One swallow does not make a summer. But British Prime Minister Boris Johnson obviously thinks otherwise. With an official declaration that England would lift all remaining Covid restrictions from this week, which he said, "...marks a moment of pride," is a celebration too early, at a stage when the global war against the Coronavirus is still neither decisively over, nor its outcome unimpeachably clear.

Calling for a new paradigm, "...living with the virus", as he termed it, ahead of and despite warnings of concern by scientists and healthcare experts, Prime Minister Johnson is clearly setting a global watermark for letting wishes lead a policy reading of reality, of wishing for an endemic and hoping an official declaration will find even the virus in compliance.

Undoubtedly, all of humanity has paid a huge price for a virus born in Wuhan, China, from where, because of either conscious complicity or failure of the Chinese Communist regime under President Xi Jinping to take adequate measures to curb its spread to every corner of the world.

Our health, economy, life and social balance have all suffered, and in that sense, everyone in the world wants the pandemic to be over, or at least be reduced permanently to an endemic. But it is just a wish, however, fervent or collective.

Vaccines continue to be a reason for hope. We are an inch away from a point where every single person is jabbed at least once...

A global shrinking of vigil against the disease, or its spread, including easing of or doing away with mask rules, social distancing norms, testing and tracking, isolation of patients, besides slowing down on the parallel push to reach universal vaccine coverage and a general larger will be disastrous.

We cannot achieve normalcy by pretence.

Ironically, the day British PM Johnson announced measures to ease down Covid restrictions, "...designed to let individuals make their own judgments about the risk of catching or transmitting Covid," Buckingham Palace confirmed that the 95-year-old Queen had tested positive.

Even while acknowledging that Covid remains dangerous, Johnson focused too much on "...time to see our country really getting back on its feet", and "...now is the moment for everybody to get their confidence back."

The world must not make this mistake, and most certainly not India, which has largely as a nation, made more correct decisions and generally kept itself on the right side of scientific advice and bold policy decision making to keep people safe.

Yesterday's data shows around 16,000 cases added per day, and falling rapidly by the day in India. Deaths are a little over 200 per day. Both new cases and fatality are showing a continual decline, despite a few spots of bother in specific cities, and states.

Vaccines continue to be a reason for hope. We are an inch away from a point where every single eligible person is jabbed at least once; and the second jab numbers are closely following.

Here is when we must resist declaring an early win over Covid, even as WHO and other global agencies have warned of possible future variants. Let us not make the mistake. Get jabbed, be safe and open up the economy and other activities, but without letting the vigil against Covid drop.

Food and Nutrition

**Nutritionist shares '10 reasons to go for a walk'; check them out
"This is the easiest way to get back on track, and I don't just mean physically," said nutritionist (The Indian Express:20220222)**

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/fitness/fitness-walk-benefits-heart-health-7705543/>

walkingHere's why you should be walking daily (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)
It is never too late to begin your fitness journey. It also does not mean strenuous workouts at the gym. You can always start by making small lifestyle and diet changes, and incorporate walking as an integral part of your daily schedule. According to nutritionist Minacshi Pettukola, walking is the best way to get your energy levels high.

Also on Walking |Why brisk-walking is a great workout option
"This is the easiest way to get back on track, and I don't just mean physically," she said.

Ayurveda

Why Ayurveda recommends against consuming curd at night or on a daily basis (The Indian Express:20220222)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/heres-what-ayurveda-says-are-the-benefits-of-having-curd-7783653/>

"If you want to have curd, have it occasionally, during the afternoon and in moderation," wrote Dr Dixa Bhavsar Savaliya along with some interesting Ayurvedic facts about curd.

curdAyurveda warns against heating curd as well as having it with meat and fish. Know more about interesting facts about curd, as per Ayurveda. (Photo: Pixabay)
Now that summer is knocking on our doors, it is important to pay attention to adjusting one's diet as per the seasonal change. For that, you don't necessarily need to do a grocery haul or completely change what your pantry and fridge look like. Small diet changes go a long way in helping the body cope up with the changing temperature and humidity levels.

Curd, or the humble dahi, that is a staple in most Indian households has numerous health benefits and is also great for topical application on skin and hair. Curd helps hydrate the body, strengthens immunity, builds stronger bones, helps in improving the skin, and is also a must have if you are on a weight loss journey or simply maintaining your goal weight.

ALSO READ |Do you know the difference between curd, yoghurt and probiotic yoghurt?
Ayurveda, too, highly approves of dahi, but it also warns about how much curd is good for the body as well as when and how you should have it. Ayurveda specialist Dr Dixa Bhavsar Savaliya recently shared a post on her Instagram elaborating on how curd is looked at through

the 'Ayurvedic lens'. She elucidated in the caption that "curd is sour in taste, hot in nature, is heavy to digest (takes a longer period to undergo digestion)." Dr Savaliya also noted that curd is good for weight gain as it increases fat, improves strength, and increases kapha and pitta (reduced vatta) and improves digestive power (agni).

She also shared the following "interesting facts about curd", while also warning against having curd everyday, and during the afternoons. Read on:

*Curd should not be heated. It loses its properties due to heating.

*It is best to avoid curd in people with obesity, kapha disorders, bleeding disorders, and inflammatory conditions.

*Curd should never be consumed at night.

*Curd should not be consumed on a daily basis. The only variation that can be consumed on a regular basis is churned buttermilk that has added spices such as rock salt, black pepper and cumin.

ALSO READ |Here's how to make curd at home without jaman or starter

*Do not mix your curd with fruits as it is a channel blocker incompatible food. Long-time consumption would trigger metabolic issues and allergies.

*Curd is incompatible with meat and fish. Any combination of curd cooked along with meats such as chicken, mutton, or fish will produce toxins in the body.

She concludes by stating that "if you want to have curd, have it occasionally, during the afternoon and in moderation."

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📣 The above article is for information purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the guidance of your doctor or other qualified health professional for any questions you may have regarding your health or a medical condition.

Bird flu

Bird flu in Maharashtra: Know all about the risk factors, symptoms, treatment and safety measures (The Indian Express:20220222)

Should you stop eating poultry products? Here's what experts have to say

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/bird-flu-in-maharashtra-everything-you-need-to-know-7782382/>

This is the second year running that Maharashtra has reported avian influenza. (Express file photo by Deepak Joshi)

Last week, it was confirmed that poultry birds in a small farm in Thane have contracted avian influenza or bird flu, according to Sachindra Pratap Singh, Commissioner of Animal Husbandry, Maharashtra. Following the incident, at least 15,600 broiler birds had been culled in Shahapur to comply with the standard operating procedure.

We asked experts to elucidate on the risks, and how to stay safe:

What is avian influenza?

“Avian influenza is the condition caused by disease with Type A viruses, avian (bird) influenza (flu). This is said to occur spontaneously among wild aquatic birds worldwide and can infect other animals, birds and domestic poultry, as per the Centre for Disease Control (CDC). According to European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, H5N5, H5N1 with H5N8 are the most generally reported flu viruses among birds,” said Dr Kirti Sabnis, Infectious Disease Specialist, Fortis Hospital Kalyan and Mulund.

Does it affect human beings?

Dr Sabnis added that “as per the CDC, avian flu viruses do not usually infect human beings. According to Mayo Clinic, such an infection is rare; only sporadic cases have been reported since 2015.” She further said that if it does infect people, illness is generally mild, but can require ICU care in few patients. It is also sporadic to have human-to-human transmission of the same.

“People can contract avian or bird flu virus by bird droppings or close contact with birds. Some people have caught the virus from plucking or cleaning infected birds. It is also quite possible to contract the virus while bathing or swimming in water contaminated with infected birds’ droppings,” stated Dr Sabnis.

mmaharashtra bird flu A team of experts from Disease Investigation Section, Commissionerate of Animal Husbandry, Pune, has been deputed for supervising and monitoring containment measures. (Express Photo)

What are the symptoms of bird flu in humans?

“Some common symptoms include cough, fever, sore throat, muscle aches, headache, and shortness of breath. People who catch bird flu may develop life-threatening complications, including pneumonia, pinkeye (conjunctivitis), respiratory failure, kidney dysfunction and heart problems,” noted Dr Dr Farah Ingale, Director-Internal Medicine, Hiranandani Hospital, Vashi-A Fortis Network Hospital.

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When should you see a doctor?

See your doctor immediately if you develop a fever, cough, or body ache, and have recently traveled to where bird flu has been reported. Be sure to let your doctor know if you visited any farms or open-air meat markets, said Dr Ingale.

Should you stop eating poultry products?

According to Dr Ingale, chicken and other poultry are safe to eat if cooked properly, as also stated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) issued to national food safety authorities. However, the sources said that no birds from flocks with the disease should enter the food chain.

Diet

How to make your diet more sustainable, healthy or cheap — without giving up nutrients

Before you abandon your traditional food choices, it's important to consider the nutritional trade-offs. If you're replacing one food with another, are you still getting the vitamins, minerals and other nutrition you need? (The Indian Express:20220222)

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/how-to-make-your-diet-more-sustainable-healthy-or-cheap-without-giving-up-nutrients-7776896/>

Every food has a different nutrient composition. (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)
People choose certain foods or change their diets for a range of reasons: to improve their health, lose weight, save money or due to concerns about sustainability or the way food is produced.

Consider the trend towards low-fat products in the 1980s and low-carb diets in the 1990s, and now, the rise in plant-based protein products and ready-to-eat meals.

But before you abandon your traditional food choices, it's important to consider the nutritional trade-offs. If you're replacing one food with another, are you still getting the vitamins, minerals and other nutrition you need?

In a recent paper, I sought to raise awareness of nutritional differences between foods by producing a new index specific to Australia. It aims to help Australians make better informed dietary choices and get the nutrients recommended for good health.

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Nutrients: are we getting enough?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes tables showing the usual intake of selected nutrients across the population. The tables also show the proportion of Australians whose usual nutrient intake is below what's known as the "estimated average requirement".

While Australian adults eat in diverse ways, they generally get enough of some nutrients regardless of their diets.

For example, most people seem to obtain adequate niacin (Vitamin B3) and phosphorus. And the tables suggest 97% of Australians get enough vitamin C.

However, inadequate intake of calcium, magnesium, vitamin B6 and zinc is common.

Around two-thirds of Australian adults consume less calcium than what's recommended (which ranges from 840 to 1100 mg/day depending upon age). Worryingly, 90 per cent of women aged over 50 don't get enough calcium.

Inadequate zinc intake is most prevalent among Australian men — more than half aged over 50 consume below recommended levels.

So what about free sugars? These include added sugars and the sugar component of honey and fruit juices, but exclude natural sugars in intact fruit, vegetables and milk.

In premium now |Explore the connection between gut health, vitamin D and immunity
It's recommended Australians limit free sugars to less than 10% of dietary energy intake. However, almost 50 per cent of Australian adults exceed this recommended limit.

Paying attention to under-consumed nutrients

Every food has a different nutrient composition. And as the Australian Dietary Guidelines show, we should eat a variety of foods to stay healthy.

We should pay particular attention to foods that are important sources of nutrients for which large numbers of Australians are not getting enough. If possible, Australians should seek to include more of these foods in their diet.

At the same time, foods with free sugars should be eaten only in moderation.

The new food index I produced seeks to help Australians achieve this. It provides an overall nutrient composition score tailored to the Australian dietary context.

The index includes eight vitamins (B1, B2, B3, B6, B12, Folate, A and C), eight minerals (calcium, phosphorus, zinc, iron, magnesium, iodine, selenium and molybdenum), along with protein and free sugars.

These 18 elements are weighted in proportion to the extent of inadequate or excessive intake in Australia. A higher score is better than a lower score.

So, the index scores foods highly if they are low in free sugars, and rich in the elements many Australians need more of — calcium, magnesium, vitamin B6, zinc and vitamin A.

Foods containing few nutrients but added sugar score very low. For example, a chocolate chip cookie weighing 35 grams scored 0.004 and a sugar-sweetened cola-flavoured beverage scored below zero.

Post Covid-19 complications

Post Covid-19 complications: Skin issues, joint pain becoming increasingly common, say experts (The Indian Express:20220222)

People should seek good rehabilitative care, exercise every day, maintain good posture, and follow a healthy diet to manage joint and muscle pain, said Dr Narendra Vaidya, joint replacement surgeon

<https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/health/post-covid-19-doctors-skin-conditions-herpes-warts-joint-pains-arthritis-7774596/>

joint pain According to Dr Vaidya, patients complain of joint pain or arthralgia, muscle pain or myalgia, extreme fatigue, reactive arthritis, and vasculitis (inflammation of the blood vessels) (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock)

The list of post-Covid complications seems to be only increasing with doctors now saying that there has also been an increase in skin conditions like herpes, and joint pains in patients

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What is causing joint issues?

There is about four-five per cent increase in arthritis cases post Covid-19 infection, said Dr Narendra Vaidya, joint replacement surgeon and managing director, Lokmanya Hospital Pune.

“During Covid, inflammatory molecules break muscle protein and decrease its synthesis causing muscle fatigue; this also damages cartilage, causing arthritis. Arthritis can also arise as sequelae of steroid and antiviral drugs used to treat Covid-19. Musculoskeletal symptoms like stiffness of joints, muscle pain are commonly seen in post-Covid patients along with decreased muscle strength. Many people complain of joint and muscle pain, and have also come with new onset of autoimmune arthritis,” he said.

Also Read | A doctor explains: What is ‘long COVID syndrome’?

According to Dr Vaidya, patients complain of joint pain or arthralgia, muscle pain or myalgia, extreme fatigue, reactive arthritis, and vasculitis (inflammation of the blood vessels). “Joint pain can be temporary or continue for months,” he said.

One more reason to develop joint pain could be the overdose of steroids or a faster. This might develop osteonecrosis of bones, leading to faster degeneration and joint pains, said Dr Richa Kulkarni, chief consulting physiotherapist, KINESIS – Sports Rehab and Physiotherapy Clinic, Pune.

How to prevent and treat the condition?

People should seek good rehabilitative care, exercise every day, maintain good posture, and follow a healthy diet to manage joint and muscle pain, said Dr Vaidya.

What are the skin conditions?

herpes Many people are experiencing herpes after Covid (Source: Getty Images/Thinkstock) Covid has induced many autoimmune and dormant infections in people with low immunity, such as herpes and warts. “Treatment with monoclonal anti-TNF alpha antibodies can cause herpes. Since the beginning of the pandemic, many people reported herpes, joint pain, and even warts. These problems are commonly seen in females when compared to males. People come with complaints like skin rash, redness, shingles around eyes nose, lips. These infections are common among senior citizens, and pregnant women. Herpes and other skin complications are getting triggered in patients who have a previous history. Do not ignore any signs like rashes, redness of the skin, and patches, seek immediate medical attention,” said Dr Vishwajeet Chavan, orthopedic surgeon, Apollo Spectra Pune.

Dr Saurabh Shah, dermatologist at Bhatia Hospital Mumbai has been seeing about one case of herpes zoster (covid related) every week. “The reason could be low immunity since Covid attacks the immune system of the body. Herpes Zoster (also known as shingles) virus (Varicella Zoster virus) is present in the body of almost every individual. When our immunity gets compromised or jeopardised, herpes zoster, which lies dormant in the body (dorsal nerve root ganglion), becomes active and flares up. Usually this skin infection is seen in patients with poorly controlled diabetes, patients with chronic renal failure, patients on chemotherapy, post medical and surgical illness and other diseases that compromise our immunity,” he explained.

There is also an uncanny increase in the incidence of urticaria in a lot of patients, said Dr Shah. “These rashes appear as itchy, red, evanescent raised areas on most parts of the body, usually after an infection (post-Covid). These invariably disappear in a few hours,” Dr Shah told indianexpress.com.

Coronavirus

कोरोना से बड़ी राहत: बीते 24 घंटों में 15 हजार से भी कम मामले, 235 की मौत, सक्रिय मरीज घटकर 2 लाख से नीचे(Amar Ujala: 20220222)

<https://www.amarujala.com/india-news/corona-cases-today-in-india-covid19-cases-india-22-february-coronavirus-active-cases-death-cases?src=flh&position=7>

न्यूज डेस्क, अमर उजाला, नई दिल्ली Published by: संजीव कुमार झा Updated Tue, 22 Feb 2022 09:45 AM IST सार

देश में कोरोना महामारी का प्रसार तेजी से कम होता जा रहा है। संक्रमितों की संख्या में जहां भारी कमी हो रही है वहीं मृतकों का आंकड़ा भी तेजी से कम हो रहा है।

भारत में कोरोना के मामले

भारत में कोरोना के मामले - फोटो : पीटीआई

विस्तार

देश में कोरोना महामारी का प्रसार तेजी से कम होता जा रहा है। संक्रमितों की संख्या में जहां भारी कमी हो रही है वहीं मृतकों का आंकड़ा भी तेजी से कम हो रहा है। स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी मंगलवार के आंकड़े के अनुसार बीते 24 घंटों में कोरोना के 13,405 मामले सामने आए हैं। इस दौरान 235 लोगों की मौत भी हुई। स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय के आंकड़े के अनुसार देश में अब 1.81 लाख (1,81,075) सक्रिय मामले बचे हैं। वहीं महामारी की शुरुआत से अब तक स्वस्थ होने वाले कुल मरीजों की संख्या 4.21 करोड़ (4,21,58,510) हो गई है। रोजाना संक्रमण दर की बात करें तो यह 1.98 फीसदी हो गई है।

सक्रिय मामले: 1,81,075

कुल रिकवरी: 4,21,58,510

कुल मौतें: 5,12,344

कुल वैक्सीनेशन: 1,75,83,27,441

दैनिक पॉजिटिविटी दर: 1.98%

राजधानी दिल्ली में बीते 24 घंटों में कोरोना के 360 मामले

दिल्ली में बीते 24 घंटों में कोरोना के 360 नए मामले सामने आए और चार मरीजों की मौत हो गई। वहीं दिल्ली में 28 दिसंबर के बाद पहली बार संक्रमण दर घटकर एक फीसदी से नीचे आ गई।

कोरोना वैक्सीनेशन का आंकड़ा 176 करोड़ के करीब

केंद्रीय स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय ने बताया कि देशभर में अब तक कोरोना वैक्सीन की 1,75,83,27,441 से अधिक डोज दी जा चुकी हैं।

अब तक कुल 76 करोड़ से अधिक सैंपल टेस्ट किए जा चुके

भारतीय चिकित्सा अनुसंधान परिषद (ICMR) ने जानकारी देते हुए बताया कि भारत में कुल कोरोना वायरस के लिए 10,84,247 सैंपल टेस्ट किए गए। वहीं देश में महामारी के शुरुआत से लेकर अब तक कुल 76,12,30,580 सैंपल टेस्ट किए जा चुके हैं।

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