



# MEDICINE INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

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## IN THIS ISSUE

Editors' Desk	1	Did You Know?	3
Quote	1	Healthy Life style	3
Courses	2	Call for Abstract	4
Focus	2	News	4
NIRF	2	Health Days	4
Opportunities	2	Alerts	5
Medicines to Avoid	2	Resources	5
Conferences	3	Nipah Virus Infection	6
Websites of Interest	3	Gallery	7

## Editors' Desk

The recent outbreak of measles in USA has raised worldwide concern. As of May 2019 more than 800 cases have been reported in this year. This has been viewed as one of the worst health crisis as the disease was declared eliminated in 2000. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene declared imposition of fine up to \$1000 for Brooklyn's residents for refusing to vaccinate. People are refusing vaccination due to many misconceptions and measles vaccine causes autism is perhaps major contributor. The association of autism and MMR vaccine was first reported in 1998 with much media attention. The article was retracted latter because of falsified data but the misinformation continue to prevent people resisting measles vaccination. Even misconceptions like polio vaccine causes impotency is prevalent in some parts of India and Pakistan. With increasing mobility of people globally the re-surfacing of infection in one region is a threat to the other. The anti-vaccination lobby is very strong and evident from the

reported 480 anti-vaccine websites. It is important to stop the growth of anti-vaccine movement to win over vaccine preventable diseases.

The WHO has declared structural overhaul recently. Under new structural changes, a new division called 'Chief Scientist Division' is created with Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Deputy Director General being the first Chief Scientist. We congratulate and wish her a great success in the new assignment. Scientist Division is created to strengthen WHO's core scientific work and ensure the quality and consistency of WHO's norms and standards. Before joining WHO, she was the Director General of ICMR.

The current issue has all our regular features. As the Nipah virus infection re-surfaced in Kerala, we have included some useful information on this too.

Hope the readers would find this issue informative and useful. We shall be happy to receiving readers' continuing patronage and constructive feedback.

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## Quote

*Polypharmacy is prosthesis for the physician's incompetence. The less he knows the more prescription he writes.*

Zeljko Poljak

## Courses

**On-line Brain Health Course:** In view of the recent evidence on risk reduction of cognitive decline, the American College of Preventive Medicine and Centre for Disease Control developed this on-line course for physicians and healthcare professionals. The course is titled as “Brain Health—Benefits of Blood Pressure Management as a Potential Mechanism to Reduce the Risk of Cognitive Decline and Dementia”. The course is available at no cost and the details can be accessed at: <https://www.acpm.org/page/brainhealthcourse>

**Course on Procurement and Supply Management:** The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with Empower School of Health, is organizing a free Procurement and Supply Chain Management online course. The course will expound the importance of PSM in ensuring the uninterrupted supply of life-saving medicines and other health products. More details are available at: <https://www.undp-psmtraining.com/login/index.php>

**Strengthening Community Health Worker Programme:** Harvard University offers this free self-paced course. The course introduces learners to the core concepts of community health worker programs, and explores what is needed to build and strengthen large-scale programs in order to improve access to high-quality health services. The curriculum highlights the key components of designing community health systems, addresses common management challenges, and showcases lessons learned from a range of contributors — from community-level practitioners to government leaders and other global health experts. Further details are available at: <https://www.edx.org/course/strengthening-community-health-worker-programs-to-deliver-primary-health-care>

## Opportunities

**TDR PG Scholarship in implementation research:** The BRAC James P. Grant School of Public Health at BRAC University in Dhaka has called for applications for the award of TDR Postgraduate Training Scholarships for one-year Master of Public Health (MPH) 2020-21 programme beginning in January 2020. The scholarship recipients will conduct their Thesis/Summative Learning Project (SLP) on implementation research on infectious diseases of poverty, including neglected tropical diseases, malaria and tuberculosis, in Bangladesh. Recipients will be enrolled as postgraduate students. Dead line of application: 01 July 2019. More details are available at: <https://www.who.int/tdr/grants/TDR-Postgraduate-Training-Fellowship-Bangladesh.pdf>

**Research Grant for improving adolescent health:** The Medical Research Council, the National Institute for Health Research and the Department for International Development are pleased to announce a fourth call for research to improve adolescent health in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). This call is being launched in partnership with the Economic and Social Research Council. The areas identified are: infections and immunity, population and systems medicine, Neurosciences and mental health, Global health. Closing date of application is 16th July 2019. More details are available at: <https://mrc.ukri.org/funding/browse/adolescent-health/fourth-global-adolescent-health-call/>

**The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), Ministry of Human Resources, Government of India, ranks the institutions across the country based on parameters: “Teaching, Learning and Resources,” “Research and Professional Practices,” “Graduation Outcomes,” “Outreach and Inclusivity,” and “Perception”. Under NIRF 2019, the Department of Pharmacy of Annamalai University is ranked at 12th position in All India basis among the Pharmacy institutions.**

### Focus: Silver Sulfadiazine Cream – not a good option for treating burns!

It has been used as an antiseptic for infected wounds, burns and ‘skin conditions due to primary bacterial infection or those with susceptible to secondary infection’. Its application to prevent infection of burns perhaps cause slow healing and increase pain. Besides there is risk of systemic adverse effects common to sulphonamides. The damaged skin, large surface area and occlusive dressings increases the risk.

The French Health Product Agency (FHPA) proposed the addition of the following in the information leaflet: contraindicated to use in children below two years; serious adverse effects – bullous reactions akin to Steven – Johnson Syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis, cytopenia and renal failure.

The FHPA has recommended restricting its use to second degree or more serious burns. There are better options available for treatment and prevention of infections: frequent cleaning with soap and water; use of chlorhexidine; or use of various antibiotics for topical / systemic administration.

[Prescrire International, September 2018]

## Conferences

**2020 CUGH Conference:** The 11th Annual Consortium of Universities for Global Health is scheduled during April 18-20, 2020, at Washington Hilton Hotel. The theme of the conference: Global Health in a Time of Worldwide Political Change. The last date for submission of abstract is 25th August 2019. More details are available at: <https://cugh2020.org/abstract-submission>

**7th FIP Pharmaceutical Sciences World Congress (PWC2020):** This world congress is scheduled during 22 to 27 May 2020 at Montreal, Canada. The theme of the event is: Smart therapeutics for a complex world. The more details are available at: <https://pswc2020.congress.pharmacy/>

**12th Global Health Supply Chain Summit 2019:** The 12th Global Health Supply Chain Summit (GHSCS) will be held over three days, November 20-22, 2019 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The summit will focus on maximizing global health supply chain impact: data and analytics, entrepreneurship and accessibility. More details are available at: <http://ghscs.com/>

### Healthy Life Style for Reducing the Risk of Dementia

Globally there are nearly 10 million new cases of dementia every year. Dementia is a major reason of disability and dependency among the older persons. It is the deterioration of cognitive function beyond what might be expected from normal aging. The World Health Organization's recent recommendations for reducing the risk of dementia are: getting regular exercise; not smoking; avoiding harmful use of alcohol; controlling weight; eating the healthy diet; and maintaining healthy blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar level. "What is good for your heart is also good for your brain". Vitamin B and E, polyunsaturated fatty acids and multi-complex supplementation are not recommended to reduce the risk of cognitive decline and/or dementia.

### Medicine to Avoid

Prescrire, an independent drug information resource, revises the list of medicines which it recommends as 'Drugs to Avoid'. The 'Drugs to Avoid in 2019' is an updated list. The up-date is done by deletion and addition. The drugs which featured previously are deleted in up-date on reassessment and similarly new drugs added to the list based on risk assessment. This year following drugs are added to the "Drugs to Avoid in 2019".

- **Ulipristal – 5 mg:** used in uterine fibroids is associated with serious hepatic adverse effects.
- **Mephenesin**, a muscle relaxant; Oxomemazine, a sedating anti-histamine with antimuscarinic activity and neuroleptic properties, authorised as a cough suppressant; topical glyceryl trinitrate, a nitrate used for anal fissure; and obeticholic acid, a bile acid derivative authorised for primary biliary cholangitis are found to have adverse effects that are disproportionate compared to the approved indications.
- **Cimetidine:** It has far more drug interactions than other H2-receptor antagonists. These drug interactions can cause serious adverse effects and cimetidine has no advantages over other H2-receptor antagonists.

[Source: Prescrire International • April 2019 • Volume 28 N° 203 • Page 108-3]

## Did You Know?

It was on 06th April 1969, the first commercial production of condom started in India by Hindustan Latex Limited, a Government owned company, at Perroorkada, Kerala, in collaboration with Okamoto Industries of Japan. At that time, the condoms were imported and heavily priced making poor access. The condom production celebrates the Golden Jubilee in 2019. The erstwhile Hindustan Latex Limited is now known as HLL Life Care Limited and perhaps the only company in the world offering everything in birth control solutions.

## Websites of Interest

**MEDBOX** [<https://www.medbox.org/>] is an open-source online library that bundles all important and relevant guidelines on one website, free of charge. You can also download MEDBOX as an App Version. There are different categories: Clinical Guidelines, Women & Child Health, and Pharmacy.

**Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI):** CBHI is the National Nodal agency mandated to build an integrated health informatics platform which can provide reliable, accurate, and relevant national health information and enable evidence based policy formulation and decision making. National Health Profile is one of important publications of the CBHI. The website of CBHI is accessible at: <http://www.cbhidghs.nic.in/index.php>

# NEWS

**Delhi High Court Orders Interim Payment to Faulty Hip Implant Victims:** The Delhi High Court on 30th May 2019 directed Johnson and Johnson Company to make interim payment of Rs 25 Lakh to each of 67 patients who had undergone revision of surgeries for alleged faulty hip implants. The company has challenged the Government's order on compensation. The Court has also clarified that in case any other judicial forum awards a compensation higher than Rs 25 Lakh to the patients, the company would pay the balance amount only.

**First Dengue Vaccine Approved:** The USFDA has recently approved the first Dengue Vaccine, Dengvaxia, for the prevention of dengue disease caused by all dengue virus serotypes (1,2,3,and 4) for persons of 9 to 16 years of age who have laboratory confirmed previous dengue infection and who live in endemic areas.

**Medical Device for ADHD:** The USFDA has recently approved a prescription only medical device, a non-drug treatment, for treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This is first of its kind is meant for patients between seven to twelve years of age who are not under prescription ADHD medications. The device, known as Monarch external Trigeminal Nerve Stimulation (eTNS) system, is intended to be used in the home under the supervision of a care giver.

**Ban of FDC of Paracetamol, Caffeine, Phenylephrine and Chlorpheniramine revoked:** This FDC was earlier prohibited for manufacture, sale and distribution for humans vide notification dated 7th September 2018. The Government of India has now revoked the ban of this FDC through the Gazette notification dated 5th February 2019.

**Delhi High Court sets aside ban of Lupin's Anti-diabetic Combination:** The Delhi High Court on 13th February 2019 set aside the Government of India's ban on Lupin's fixed dose combination drug (FDC) Gluconorm-PG 1 Forte and Gluconorm-PG 2 Forte and remanded back the matter to DTAB/Sub-Committee constituted with the direction to re-examine the issue regarding the FDCs in question in accordance with the directions issued earlier.

**Device to treat heart failure patients:** The USFDA has recently approved a new device that would help treat patients with life-threatening heart failure, and address an unmet need in patients who fail to get adequate benefits from standard treatments and have no alternative treatment options. After the device is implanted, a physician tests and programmes the device, which delivers electrical impulses to the heart during regular heartbeats to help improve the heart's squeezing capability. The regulatory authority has granted approval of the Optimizer Smart System to US-based Impulse Dynamics.

## Call for Abstract

AICTE and DST- PURSE supported National Conference on "Advances in Pharmacy Practices: From Drug Discovery to Patient Safety" is scheduled on 23rd & 24th August 2019 at Department of Pharmacy, Annamalai University. The abstract may be submitted to [aicteuapp2019@gmail.com](mailto:aicteuapp2019@gmail.com). Contact Person: Dr. S. Parimalakrishnan, Associate Professor and Coordinator, Contact No.: +919025211742; +918667619440.

## Important Health Days - 2019

July	1	Doctors Day (In India)
	11	World Population Day
	29	ORS Day
August	1-7	World Breast Feeding Week
	25 th Aug – 8 th Sept.	Eye Donation Fortnight
September	1-7	National Nutrition week
	4-11	World Pharmacy Week
	12	World Oral Health Day
	21	World Alzheimer's Day
	25	World Pharmacists Day
	26	World Day of the Deaf
	28	World Heart Day / World Rabies Day

# Alerts [WHO Pharmaceuticals Newsletter, No. 5, 2018]

**Advisory against pacemaker malfunctioning:** Following the decision of USFDA, the Drugs Controller General (I) has issued an advisory for patients and healthcare providers against Medtronic's Astra pacemakers battery related malfunctioning. Implantable pacemakers or cardiac resynchronization therapy pacemakers (CRT-P) are devices that provide pacing for slow heart rhythms and heart failure. The users are cautioned against possible sudden drop of battery levels during follow up visits. Patients must watch out for signs such as feeling lightheaded, dizzy, chest pain, and severe shortness of breath. There are about 1600 users in India.

**Azithromycin's new warning:** The US FDA has issued a warning that Azithromycin can cause abnormal changes in the electrical activity of the heart which may lead to a potentially fatal irregular heart rhythm. Patients with existing QT interval prolongation, low blood levels of potassium or magnesium, a slower than normal heart rate, using drugs to treat abnormal heart rhythm or arrhythmias are at a higher risk. Healthcare professionals are advised to take note of this new warning while prescribing azithromycin.

**Ulipristal Acetate associated with Liver Injury:** Ulipristal, used in the treatment of uterine fibroid, is found to cause serious liver injury. The Health Canada, Canada's Drug Regulating Agency advised that it should not be used by women with liver problems. More than one course of the treatment should be restricted to only those of child bearing stage who are unable to undergo surgery to remove fibroids.

**E-cigarette is associated with seizures:** Some people using e-cigarettes have experienced seizures. Seizures or convulsions are known potential side effects of nicotine toxicity and have been reported in relation to intentional or accidental swallowing e-liquid. Healthcare professionals are advised to: ask patients about e-cigarettes use particularly while providing care following a seizure; and consider testing nicotine levels and a nicotine metabolite, in addition to the typical urine toxicology screening test.

**Newly identified ADRs for package inserts of drugs:** The Drugs Controller General (India) has issued the direction to all state Drugs Controllers to initiate steps to ensure that the following newly identified ADRs are included in the package inserts of the products: Angioedema for cefotaxime; Steven Johnson Syndrome / Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis for ofloxacin; Seizure for tranexamic acid; Urinary incontinence for quetiapine; DRESS syndrome for sulfasalazine; Gum hyperplasia for sodium valproate; and Acute generalized exanthematous pustulosis for cefixime.

## Resources

**Management of Physical Health Conditions in Adults with Severe Mental Disorders:** Preventable physical health conditions lead to premature mortality in people with severe mental disorders, reducing their life span by 10-20 years. The majority of these premature deaths are due to physical health conditions. The physical health of people with severe mental disorders is commonly overlooked, not only by themselves and people around them, but also by health systems, resulting in crucial physical health disparities and limited access to health services. Many lives can be saved by ensuring that people with severe mental disorders receive treatment. This WHO's guideline provides evidence-based, up-to-date recommendations to practitioners on how to recognize and manage comorbid physical and mental health conditions. The guideline can be accessed at: <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/275718/9789241550383-eng.pdf?ua=1>

**Standards of Practice for Clinical Pharmacy Services:** The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA), the Professional Pharmacy Organization, has developed the standards of practice for clinical pharmacy services. These standards are applicable to the delivery of clinical pharmacy services across all care settings: inpatients, out patients and patients in the community. Though these are the standards developed for adoption in Australia, they are useful in other countries too. They can be used as guidelines for developing local standards. These standards can be accessed at: <https://www.shpa.org.au/resources/standards-of-practice-for-clinical-pharmacy-services>

**Cough (Acute):** Antimicrobial Prescribing: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) developed an antimicrobial prescribing strategy for acute cough associated with an upper respiratory tract infection or acute bronchitis in adults, young people and children. It aims to limit antibiotic use and reduce antibiotic resistance. This can be downloaded from: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng120/resources/cough-acute-antimicrobial-prescribing-pdf-66141652166341>

**Guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age:** Achieving health for all means doing what is best for health right from the beginning of people's lives. Early childhood is a period of rapid development and a time when family life style patterns can be adopted to boost healthy gains. If healthy physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep habits are established early in life, this helps shape habits through childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The World Health Organization developed guidelines in this regard which can be accessed at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/311664>

# Nipah Virus Infection

[<https://ncdc.gov.in/index4.php?lang=1&level=0&linkid=113&lid=228>]

## Transmission:

- Spread of Nipah virus to humans may occur after close contact with other Nipah infected people, infected bats, or infected pigs. Bat secretions laden with virus can infect people during fruit tree climbing, eating/handling contaminated fallen fruits or consuming raw date palm sap/juice or toddy.
- Human to Human infection can occur from close contact with persons affected with Nipah at home while providing care close contact and in hospital setting if; appropriate personal protective equipments are not used.
- Handling of dead bodies, suspected of death due to Nipah virus should be done in accordance with the government advisory. During this emotional moment traditional rituals and practices may need to be modified to prevent the exposure of family members to the disease.

## Prevention:

- Wash hands with soap and water after coming in contact with a sick person or animal
- Avoid consuming raw date palm sap or toddy
- Consume only washed fruits
- Avoid consuming half eaten fruits from the ground
- Avoid entering into abandoned wells
- Handling of dead bodies should be done in accordance with the government advisory

**Symptoms:** The incubation period of Nipah infection is 4 to 21 days. The hallmark of Nipah infection is the acute onset of the symptoms: moderate to high grade fever, headache, vomiting, cough, breathlessness, change in behaviour / sensorium, seizures / abnormal movement, myalgia and fatigue.

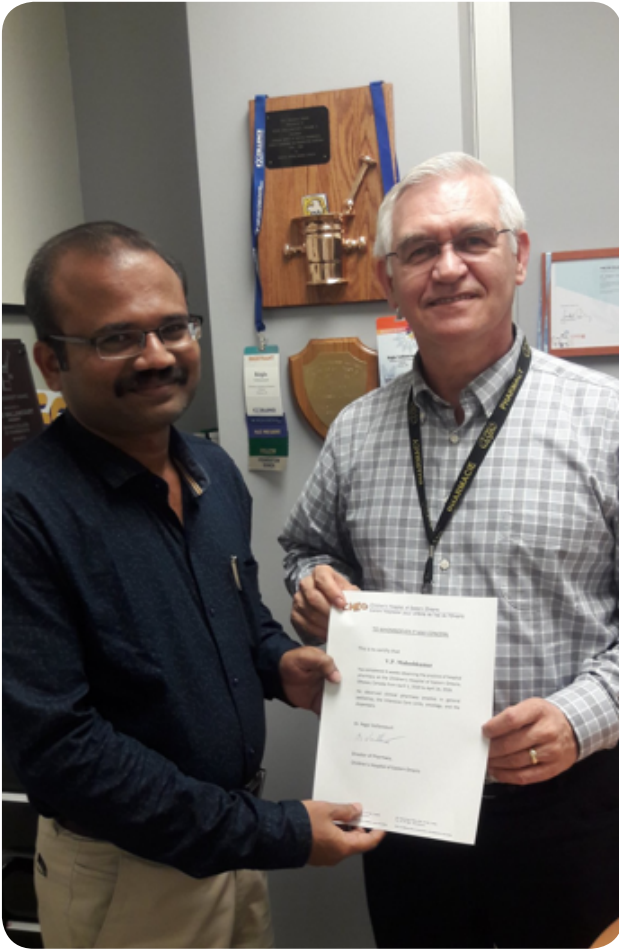
**Symptomatic and Supportive Treatment:** There is no effective treatment and the following guidelines are for symptomatic and supportive treatment:

- Patient be advised to drink plenty of fluids;
- Fluid maintenance and electrolyte balance: Fluid restriction, after initial resuscitation, is advisable to avoid fluid overload / complication;
- Nasogastric fluid feeding / parenteral nutrition may be initiated;
- Paracetamol is suggested for fever, myalgia and headache. Salicylates / aspirin is strictly contraindicated due to its potential complications;
- The case would be constantly monitored for clinical / radiological evidence of lower respiratory tract infection and for hypoxia (respiratory rate, oxygen saturation, level of consciousness);
- Patients with signs of tachypnea, dyspnea, respiratory distress and oxygen saturation less than 90% should be supplemented with oxygen therapy. The types of oxygen device to be used would depend on the severity of hypoxemia;
- Oropharyngeal or endotracheal suction when used should mandatorily be done using a closed suction circuit to avoid dispersal of aerosol in the environment;
- Patients with severe pneumonia and acute respiratory failure must be supported with mechanical ventilation. Invasive mechanical ventilation is preferred choice;
- Anticonvulsants: intravenous diazepam, phenobarbitone, phenytoin or levetiracetam may be used in the standard recommended dose. Mannitol could be used in case of raised intracranial tension;
- Suspected cases does not require antibiotic therapy. Antibacterial agents should be administered, if required, as per acceptable guideline. If required, in patients on mechanical ventilation, antibiotics should be judiciously used to prevent hospital associated infections;
- Patients requiring vasopressors for shock may be started on noradrenaline infusion with or without dobutamine in cases with significant cardiac dysfunction;
- Use of steroids have not been shown to be effective in managing neurological / respiratory involvement.

## DISCLAIMER:

The Newsletter intends to provide updated and reliable information on medicines and other related issues in an attempt to equip healthcare professionals to take informed decision in recommending medicines to the patients. However, they are encouraged to validate the contents. None of the people associated with the publication of the Newsletter nor the University shall be responsible for any liability for any damage incurred as a result of use of contents of this publication. The brand names of medicines, if mentioned, are for illustration only and the Newsletter does not endorse them.

# Gallery



Dr. V.P. Maheshkumar receiving exposure training completion certificate in Clinical Pharmacy at Canada under Pharmabridge Programme of FIP from 01.04.2019 to 26.04.2019 at Children's hospital of Eastern Ontario, Ottawa, Canada

Felicitation of  
Prof. M.K.M. Surulivel and  
Prof. S. C. Basak on  
superannuation  
Date: 30.04.2019



Ms. P. Dhanalakshmi, III Year PharmD Student, receiving the Second Prize in the Essay Competition – 2019 on the occasion of 129th Birth Anniversary of Dr. BR Ambedkar, organised by Annamalai University,

