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December 8, 2018/Hindustan Times

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Sleeping too much is bad for you, here's why

December 8, 2018/Hindustan Times

Turns out, sleeping more than six to eight hours a night is associated with an increased risk of death and cardiovascular diseases.

According to a recent study at the McMaster and Peking Union Medical College, people sleeping more than the recommended upper limit of eight hours increased their risk of major cardiovascular events, like stroke or heart failure, as well as death by up to 41 per cent. But a possible reason for this could be that people have underlying conditions causing them to sleep longer, which in turn could raise the risk of cardiovascular disease or death, explained the authors of the study.

The findings of the study appeared in the Journal of European Heart.

The team also identified a rising risk among daytime nappers.

“Daytime napping was associated with increased risks of major cardiovascular events and deaths in those with [more than] six hours of nighttime sleep but not in those sleeping [less than] 6 hours a night,” said Chuangshi Wang, a researcher.

India's first artificial heart valve technology launched

December 8, 2018/Hindustan Times

In line with the Make in India initiative, global medical device maker Meril Life Sciences on Saturday launched its first indigenously designed and manufactured artificial aortic valve for patients who are at a high risk or unwilling to undergo open heart valve replacement surgery. The Transcatheter Aortic Heart Valve Replacement (TAVR), which will be sold under the brand name “Myval”, is a minimally invasive procedure in which the doctor places an artificial valve into the patient’s diseased valve via a catheter inserted through the femoral artery (large artery in groin). It is an alternative way to replace diseased valves without undergoing traditional open heart procedure, which some patients may not receive well. “Meril is the first Indian company to commercially make this therapy available in the country. Through the commercialisation of this technology, Meril will soon bring the next generation treatment modality to thousands of patients across the country and globally,” said Sanjeev Bhatt, VP Corporate Strategy, Meril Life Sciences. TAVR has been dominated by US-based medical devices makers Medtronic and Edwards Lifesciences.

Wasp venom offers hope against lung diseases

December 9, 2018/The Indian Express

MIT engineers have developed new antimicrobial peptides, which can combat bacteria causing respiratory and other infections, based on a naturally occurring peptide produced by a South American wasp. The venom of insects such as wasps and bees is full of compounds that can kill bacteria. Unfortunately, many of these compounds are also toxic for humans, making it impossible to use them as antibiotic drugs. However, in a study over mice, the team repurposed a toxin normally found in *Polybia paulista* — a South American wasp — to create variants of the peptide that are potent against bacteria but non-toxic to human cells.

They found that their strongest peptide could completely eliminate *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* — a strain of bacteria that causes respiratory and urinary tract

infections and is resistant to most antibiotics. “We’ve repurposed a toxic molecule into one that is a viable molecule to treat infections,” said Cesar de la Fuente-Nunez, postdoctoral researcher at MIT. “By systematically analysing the structure and function of these peptides, we’ve been able to tune their properties and activity,” Fuente-Nunez added.



Inflammatory bowel disease ups prostate cancer risk: Study

December 10, 2018/Hindustan Times

Men with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) are four to five times at higher risk of being diagnosed with prostate cancer, according to researchers including one of Indian-origin. IBD is inflammation of all or part of the digestive tract and is a common chronic condition that includes Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis.

The findings showed that men with IBD have higher than average prostate-specific antigen (PSA) -- a substance produced by the prostate gland.

Elevated PSA levels may indicate prostate cancer -- a non-cancerous condition such as prostatitis, or an enlarged prostate. “These patients may need to be screened more carefully than a man without inflammatory bowel disease,” said Shilajit Kundu, Associate Professor from Northwestern University in the US.

“If a man with inflammatory bowel disease has an elevated PSA, it may be an indicator of prostate cancer,” Kundu added. However, many people think their PSA is elevated just because they have an inflammatory condition. For the study, published in the journal European Urology, the team looked at 1,033 men with IBD and a control group of 9,306 men without the disease.

Cutting out red meat reduces risk of heart disease in one month

December 11, 2018/Deccan Chronicle

A new study conducted by scientists from the Cleveland Clinic Centre for Microbiome and Human Health have found that regular consumption of red meat can raise level of a heart disease-causing chemical by more than ten times.

However, the study also adds that one can undo the damage eating them cause within just one month, if they cut out red meat. The organic compound is known as TMAO (trimethylamine N-oxide) and having high levels of it is associated with increasing the risk of stroke, heart attacks and premature death. The study found that the chemical level rise threefold after just one month of eating red meat. Compared to people who ate white meat or veggie meals, red meat eaters had a ten-fold risk. On average, TMAO levels in the blood and urine increased approximately 3-fold during the red meat diet, compared to the white meat or non-meat diets, with some patients showing over a 10-fold rise. However, after patients stopped the red meat diet, TMAO levels in the blood and urine fell back down over the following month.

Your eyes may signal your mental stress level

December 13, 2018/Hindustan Times

With demands of work productivity shooting up stress levels, researchers have discovered that a person’s eyes may offer a solution. The study showed that the pupil dilation - widening of the pupils of the eyes - could be used to indicate levels of stress of a person in a multitasking environment. “Many people multitask but currently there is no measurement for someone’s mental well-being. However, we found that the size of a pupil could be the key to measuring someone’s mental

state while they multitask,” said Jung Hyup Kim, Assistant Professor from the University of Missouri in the US. To understand how everyone experiences stress differently, the researchers used a simulated oil and gas refinery plant control room where they watched, through the motion-capture and eye-tracking technology, as the participants reacted to unexpected changes, such as alarms.

Back, neck pains can be heart attacks in women

December 13, 2018/Deccan Chronicle

Women have been found to wait longer in seeking medical help in case of a heart attack according to a recent study as they are unable to understand the symptoms of the pain. The pain in men is usually seen in the heart and left arm but for women the pain is in the back, shoulder and also stomach which makes them wait longer. The delay in women, according to the study ranges from a minimum of 37 minutes to an hour before rushing to the hospital. The study found that women and their family members are not able to understand that the symptoms are due to a heart attack. Understanding the symptoms in women has been a challenge for the doctors too, as it was earlier believed that heart attacks occurred only in men. Due to this reason, there have been limited studies

Rising dementia in India

December 14, 2018/Deccan Chronicle

Ageing population, trauma cases, stroke, vascular diseases, addiction, diabetes, hypertension, genetic and nutritional factors, stroke and poor socio-economic status are the risk factors for dementia. In India, the conditions of stroke and trauma are seeing a rise. Dr S.K. Das’ study in the Journal of Neurology in India has found that the annual progression rate of stroke survivors with dementia was 3.53 per cent. It shows that 1 out of 28 stroke survivors become demented each year. Dr K.K. Aggarwal, president-elect of the Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania, explained, “Stroke results in a sudden loss to the brain and impairs neurological functioning. Obesity, smoking, hypertension, alcohol consumption, diabetes and a family history of neurological disorders are considered some common factors leading to stroke.

With regards,

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