



SERUM TIMES

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SERUM MEDICAL BULLETIN

From the desk of the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers/Doctors,

Hope you are well. Now we are in the midst of changing seasons. We are going to enter in the summer. Summer is very painful for many people; they get tired very easily, and excessive sweating may create a problem. It is difficult to go outside at noon. So, prefer to work in the room or under any shed as far as possible. Drink water sufficiently. But be cautious about taking outside food. In summer, outside food may create health problems easily due to several reasons. Aged people should be more cautious about the sun and food in summer. In the next issue, we will discuss summer related diseases.



Some health problems that India has been facing are obesity. Recently, studies by The Lancet (published on 3rd March 2025) observed that about 21.8 crore men and 23.1 crore women will be overweight or obese by 2050. That is an alarming health problem that India has been suffering from. The studies also pointed out that by 2050, as many as 380 crore people, or over half of all children and adolescents worldwide, will be overweight. As in 2021, only in eight countries, half of these are found, for example, in China 40.2 crore, India 18 crore, USA 17.2 crore, etc.

One of the main reasons is the consumption of calorie-dense foods high in sugar, salt, and fat. Sedentary life style is also a cause for this. So, we request that you must think about this and change your lifestyle.

In this issue, we are going to discuss two important stories. Story 1 discusses an autoimmune disease, Alopecia Areata (AA). Alopecia means bald, and areata means patchy. The disease causes hair loss on the scalp, face and sometimes other body areas like under the arms or on the legs. It is known that about 2% of the people across the world will experience AA at some point in their lifetime.

Story 2 discusses the special impact of eating one orange per day. It is known from a very large sample that if a person eats a medium orange per day he/she can have a 20% lower chance of depression risk. Mental depression has been a growing human health problem around the world. This is why we discuss topics that deal with different mental problems and how to check them. So, the story will help you to keep your long-term health better.

Stay safe.

With best wishes,

Sanjib Acharya

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Alopecia Areata, a genetic disease, can happen to anyone

Story 1

Alopecia areata (AA) is an autoimmune disease that attacks one's hair follicles, causing patchy hair loss. The patches are generally small and round, but the shape and amount of hair loss may be bigger or smaller. What does autoimmune disease mean? The immune system is the first defence against invaders like germs from outside the body, helps to protect one from getting sick, and promotes healing when we are unwell or injured. In the case of autoimmune disease, the immune system attacks one's body itself instead of defending it. There are over 100 autoimmune diseases that can affect almost any tissue or organ in the body, depending on where one's immune system malfunctions, including joints, muscles, skin, blood vessels, digestive system, and nervous system.

Who are the most affected by AA?

Anyone can have this disease, both men and women of all ethnic groups. It can begin at any age, but most people get it in their teens, twenties, or thirties. About 20% of cases involve children. When it occurs amongst children of less than 10 years, it tends to be more extensive and progressive. It is related to family history, i.e., if one has a close family member with this disease, one may have a higher risk of getting it.

Symptoms of AA

AA begins with the sudden loss of round or oval patches of hair on the scalp. Any part of the body can be affected, such as the beard area of men, eyebrows, and eyelashes. There may not be any rash, redness, or scarring on the bare patches. Some say they felt tingling, burning, or itching on patches of skin right before the hair fall. The hair regrows within a few months, and additional bare patches develop. Small patches join and form larger ones. Sometimes, there is a progression to complete loss of body hair. But it is not common.



Causes of AA

One's immune system attacks his/her hair follicles because it thinks they are foreign invaders, bacteria, viruses, parasites, etc. that cause infection, illness, and disease. One should note that AA is not a contagious disease.

Diagnostics and tests

It is diagnosed by physical examination. One has to open their family history and the time of noticing the start of the problem. The patients' nails to be examined as they can indicate important things about the disease.

The doctor examines the scalp for signs of infection, sends a sample of hair to the lab for analysis. Even a biopsy of scalp may be required to check for skin disease. In many cases blood test is also conducted. But the problem of AA cannot be fully cured.

The problem can be managed to check the spread.

Eating one orange a day links to a 20% lower risk of developing depression - study reveals

Story 2

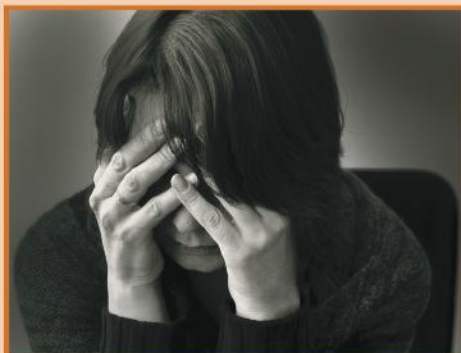
Generally, people eat oranges as they are tasty and a very good source of vitamin C. It is also known that eating oranges helps to keep our skin well. But a new study has observed that it could also help protect one's mental health. Citing the Journal where the reports were first published, a famous health magazine mentioned that Harvard researchers have discovered that eating just one medium orange per day is linked to a 20% lower risk of developing depression.

The reason behind the link to a lower risk of developing depression

The researchers observed that the connection depends on a specific gut microbe which is called *Faecalibacterium prausnitzii*. This microbe thrives when one eats citrus fruits. They also observed that this bacterium appears to influence the production of crucial brain chemicals like serotonin and dopamine. These are neurotransmitters or chemical messengers that regulate our mood and emotions.

The researchers found that lower levels of this bacterium in people create the problem of depression. One should note that serotonin and dopamine act differently. Dopamine is involved in movement, coordination, and feelings of pleasure and reward. On the other hand, serotonin is involved in emotions. But it also affects digestion and metabolism. People sometimes refer to these two elements as "happy hormones" as they have a role to play in regulating mood and motion. They are also involved in several mental health conditions, including low mood and depression.

Dr. Raaj Mehta, a lead researcher of this study from Harvard Medical School, reportedly said that when one looked at people's total fruit and vegetable consumption or at other individual fruits such as apples or bananas, one did not see any relationship between intake and risk of depression. The effect seemed to be specific to citrus.²¹



The research methodology

The study involves a very large sample. As many as 32,000 middle-aged women were tracked from 2003 to 2017. But the result of the observation was validated when a similar method of study was done on men. But the researchers mentioned that these studies are observational. This means it shows a correlation but does not prove that eating oranges directly prevents depression. The researchers found growing pieces of evidence that our gut health significantly influences our mental wellbeing. It is expected that more things will come out in new studies in the coming days about this matter.





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CSR Activities & Events of SERUM throughout March, 2025



Mar 1: Sri Sanjib Acharya at SALIL @ 100 a calendar launch event held at SAREGAMAPA Studio



Mar 9: Sri Sanjib Acharya at Blood donation org by Vidyasagar Sporting Club



Mar 18: STPF members at the Holi celebration org by SCUD



Mar 8: International Women's Day celebration at SERUM Auditorium



Mar 23: Sri Sanjib Acharya at the 25th Year Voluntary Blood Donation Camp organised by Students of Bablu Sir



Mar 24: Sri Sanjib Acharya visited at Sarada Prosad Institution for Girls for Thalassemia Awareness Camp



Mar 27: The Cooking & Baking Class where Varsha Students learned to make noodles



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