



SERUM TIMES

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SERUM MEDICAL BULLETIN

From the desk of the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers/Doctors,

Hope you are well. I think you have passed the winter season without major health problems. But at the beginning of February, the suspected disease, Guillian-Berre Syndrome (GBS), has taken many lives. Maharashtra, mainly Pune and its surrounding areas was the worst sufferer with 140 cases as of the beginning of February. GBS is a rare nerve disorder disease. The source of the disease, in many cases, was water contamination. In West Bengal, some cases were found but they did not spread much. Nine patients in the state were under treatment after exhibiting symptoms including paralysis of the lower body and consequent pressure on their respiratory system. So, be careful and watchful but do not panic.



We are in the spring season. The season is notorious for many diseases. Some of the diseases like allergies, asthma, sunburn, poison ivy, and seasonal depression are common in spring. Seasonal allergy is the biggest health problem in spring. It emerges from trees, grass, weed pollens, etc. Runny nose, sneezing, post nasal drip, nasal congestion, and itchy eyes are common symptoms of seasonal allergy. Additionally, the respiratory virus also affects the respiratory system. Moreover, sinus infection which is related to pollen flies in the air. Furthermore, conjunctivitis or pinky eyes. Other points are Hay fever or allergic rhinitis also related to pollens and food-borne illnesses that emerge due to the growth of bacteria in food. So, keep yourselves clean, use a mask if it suits take and healthy food. Consult doctors when you are really affected.

In this issue, in Story 1 we have discussed how the health sector has been allocated funds by the union government. Every year we cover this topic in the March issue. The allocation of money in the health sector has been increased by about Rs. 900 crore in FY 26 but it has been allocated less than 2% of the Budgets for FY 25 and FY 26. However, the government's target is to raise its share of expenditure to 2.5% of total allocation. Story 2 touches upon the findings of a new study that observes how good quality food enhances biological lives, and even young people look like older persons if not quality food is taken. It is an interesting article.

Wish you healthy life.

Sanjib Acharya

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Budget 25 allocates more funds to health but it is declining as a % of the GDP

Story 1

The Annual Budget 25 of the Indian government allocated more than Rs. 9,000 crore in the health sector in FY 26 compared to the Budget of 24. In the previous Budget 24, the total outlay was Rs. 86,582.5 crore (revised estimate), and this year, it has been Rs. 95,957.8 crore. But if you look at the percentage of total budget expenditure in healthcare outlay, has been decreased to 1.97 in 25 and 1.9% in 24. The decline in the total budget for the healthcare sector has been a concern. The National Health Policy (2017) recommended that public health expenditure should account for 2.5% of GDP by 2025 and from 2017 to 2023 healthcare allocations have consistently remained above 2% of total annual Budgets.

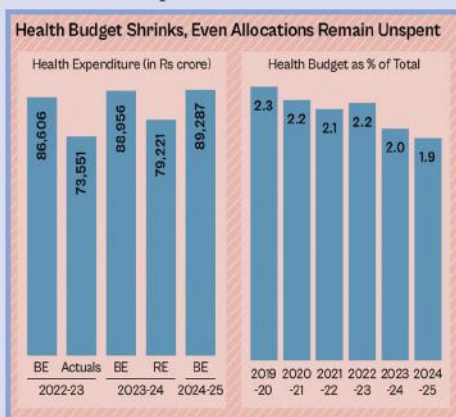
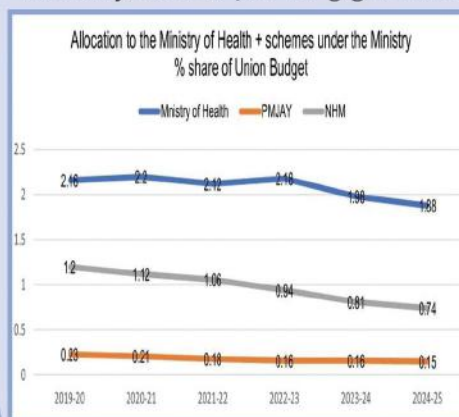
Some special allocation in healthcare in Budget 25

First, major initiatives have been taken to access cancer treatment in district hospitals. In those hospitals, there will be daycare cancer centers over the next three years. These centers will provide chemotherapy, administer essential medications, perform biopsies, and manage complications.

Secondly, thirty-six life-saving drugs for cancer, rare diseases, and chronic illness will be exempted from import duty, and a cut of import duty of 5% for the other six drugs. Customs duty on bulk drug purchases for manufacturing various cancer drugs will also be nil from the next FY.

Thirdly, patient assistance Programmes (PAPs) that assist patients without health insurance by covering full medication costs or offering discounts on medicines will continue their jobs.

Fourthly, AB-PM-JAY for gig workers has been expanded to cover 1 crore gig workers, who will be registered



on the e-Shram portal with ID cards for healthcare access. "Gig workers are vulnerable to several healthcare problems, particularly since they work under stressful conditions, be provided some healthcare", said Finance Minister in her Budget speech.

Fifthly, the Budget allocates Rs. 4,200 crore for PM-BHIM and sets up five skill centers to train 3,00,000 healthcare professionals annually.

Sixthly, PM Matru Vandana Yojna will expand maternal health programmes with increased funds for child nutrition and vaccination.

Seventhly, more Anganwadi centers will be upgraded with digital tracking systems.

The government's initiatives to develop the healthcare sector are good. However, its success depends on many factors other than adequate allocations. It needs a long-term initiative because the supply of quality healthcare facilities is a very difficult task. Indians will have to be informed about their lifestyle. As health problems are growing becoming lifestyle problems.





A recent research observes a link between diet quality and biological aging

Story 2

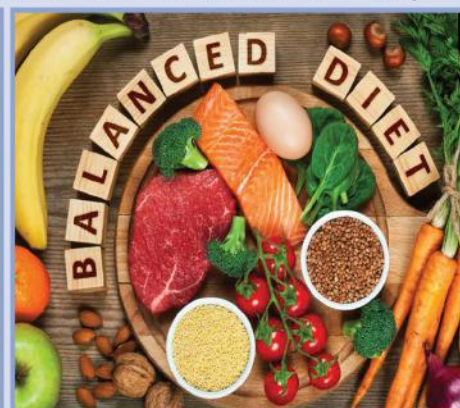
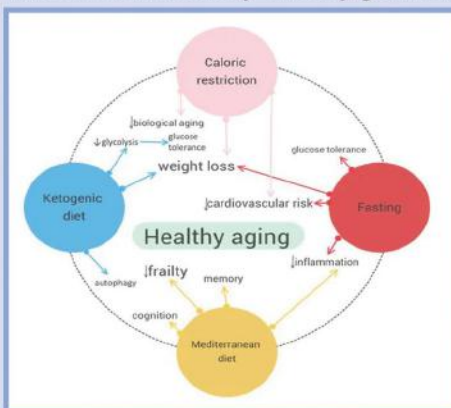
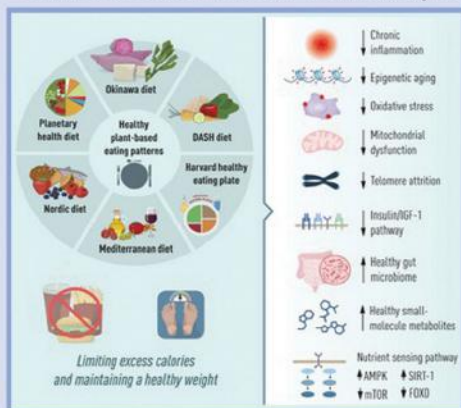
A group of scientists from Finland in their latest research has found that poor diets may contribute to accelerate biological aging, even in young adults. By poor diet, they meant food with high amounts of fast food and processed meat but low amounts of fruits and vegetables. The study was published in the Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Difference between biological and chronological age

Chronological age means the number of years one was born but biological age measures how well someone is aging. The measure of biological aging cannot be measured easily. So, the one needs two terminologies used in the study are Grinage and Dunedin PACE. The difference between chronological and biological age is to estimate the acceleration of aging and predict life span. The second provides the pace of aging, i.e., how many biological years pass per year of chronological age. It is well-established that a healthy diet reduces the risk of disease and death. These benefits are likely due to a wide range of mechanisms, one important of which is epigenetic changes. Epigenetic changes are modifications to DNA that alter how genes are expressed without changing the DNA sequence. These changes can be caused by environmental factors and behaviours. Earlier little was known about diet and epigenetics.

Study methodology as presented in Clinical Nutrition (February 25)

The new study involved 826 young adults of 21-25 ages. Food and beverage intakes were assessed using a food frequency questionnaire. Biological aging was estimated using the epigenetic clocks Grim Age and Dunedin PACE. Latent class analysis was used to identify dietary patterns. The association between dietary



patterns and biological aging was assessed using linear regression modelling at the individual level. This was followed by within-twin pair analyses to account for genetic liabilities and shared familial confounders.

Results: Six dietary patterns were identified.

One is high in fast food, low in fruits and vegetables, 2) plant-based, 3) health conscious, 4) western and infrequent fish, 5) western with regular fish and balanced average. At the individual level, Grim Age acceleration was slower in plant-based, health-conscious, and balanced-average patterns compared to the high fast food, low food and beverages and faster in the western with infrequent fish pattern compared to the balanced average, regardless of sex, non-alcoholic energy intake, smoking, and alcohol consumption.

Conclusion of the research group

Diets high in fast food, processed red meat, and sugar-sweetened beverages and low in fruits and beverages are associated with accelerated biological aging in youth and adulthood. The clustering effect of lifestyle factors and genetic confounders should be considered when interpreting the findings.





CSR Activities & Events of SERUM throughout February, 2025



Feb 3: Saraswati Puja Celebration at SERUM Auditorium



Feb 9: Varsha Students participated in Aashayein, 2025 the sports meet



Feb 9: Sanjib Acharya at the Blood Donation Camp organised by Bengali Sangha



Feb 9: Sanjib Acharya at the Blood Donation Utsab organised by Tarun Tirtha



Feb 13: Free Doctor's Clinic by Dr. Shekhar Ghosh at SERUM Auditorium



Feb 16: Sanjib Acharya at the Blood Donation Camp organised by Cossipore Yuva Manthan



Feb 19: Sanjib Acharya at the Mega Procession to celebrate the 129th Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's historic return to Kolkata



Feb 22: Thalassemia Awareness & Health Camp organised by Serum Thalassaemia Prevention Federation at Goabagan Nabarun Athletic Club



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This is a Medical Bulletin. Edited, compiled & published by Editorial Board for and on behalf of S SERUM Analysis Centre (P) Ltd., 82/4B, Bidhan Sarani, Kolkata 700004. Chief Editor: Sanjib Acharya. Website: serumanalysiscentre.com e-Mail: serum.kol@gmail.com Phone: +91 62895 32188 / 98302 74990 / 98300 16594

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