



SERUM TIMES

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SERUM MEDICAL BULLETIN

From the desk of the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers/Doctors,

We hope everything is going well on your end. The festival season has gone away, but we should remain cautious about our health. But in the meantime, an anxiety of Nipah virus (NIV) has gripped West Bengal because as of 16th January, five NIV cases had been confirmed, and that led to the death of one person. Surprisingly, among the infected cases, two are nurses, a doctor, and a health staff member of a nursing home.



NIV is highly dangerous, with its fatality rate estimated between 40 to 75%. The state government has been very active in dealing with the virus, and the central government has also been assisting with utmost seriousness with the state. The source of infection is yet to be confirmed, but consuming raw date palm sap (Khejurer rosh) has been a well-known source of transmission.

But do not panic. Maintain safety measures given by the government, like washing, peeling, and cleaning fruits before eating them. Do not eat fruit that shows signs of being bitten by bats or any other birds. Maintain hygiene, avoid those with symptoms like high fever, headache, respiratory diseases, and severe muscle pain. Please contact a doctor if someone has these types of health problems.

In this issue, we have touched upon two health matters. The Story 1 discusses about ataxia disease. It is a neurological problem characterized by loss of voluntary muscle control. It leads to clumsy movement affecting balance in walking, speech, and eye movements. etc. It is mainly a genetic disease; in many cases, it is also acquired. It is not a very common disease, globally, with only 4 to 5 cases in one lakh population on average. But its prevalence varies significantly by type and ethnicity. In the case of India, it has unique patterns. India has specific genetic hotspots, but no exact figure of occurrence is available. It is known that it is extremely prevalent in the Agarwal community in north India. In India, SCA and SCA12 subtypes are common. In India, ataxia is underdiagnosed.

Story 2 is related to recent research that has found how brain aging can be delayed. We know that brain aging, that is, dementia or cognitive impairment, has been a growing problem in India and other low- and middle-income countries. Globally, in 2021, an estimated 57 million people were living with the problem of dementia alone. It is said it may increase to 82 million by 2030, and by 2050, it may exceed 152 million. It is to be noted that it is projected that over 60% of people with dementia live in low- and middle-income countries, and by 2050 the share may go up to 71% in those regions.

Hope the stories will be very enlightening and helpful for you. Once again wish you happy days ahead.

Sanjib Acharya

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Ataxia- arises with a wide range of conditions or as a stand-alone condition

Story 1

Ataxia is a problem with the area of the brain, ears, or other parts of the nervous system. It is a neurological sign of poor muscle control and a condition. Ataxia may not be a single disease. It results from damage to the cerebellum or nervous system, causing clumsy movements, balance issues, slurred speech, and vision problems.

Why does ataxia happen?

Many conditions, including genetic conditions, can cause ataxia. It usually occurs due to damage to the part of the brain called the cerebellum or its connections. The cerebellum controls muscle coordination. It can also be due to stroke, tumours, multiple sclerosis, degenerative diseases, and alcohol misuse. Certain medicines can also cause ataxia.

Symptoms of Ataxia

Ataxia symptoms can develop over time as well as start suddenly. It can be a symptom of several nervous system conditions, such as 1) poor coordination, 2) walking unsteadily, 3) poor balance, 4) trouble with eating, writing, or buttoning shirts, 5) changes in speech, 6) back and forth eye movements that cannot be controlled, and 7) trouble in swallowing.

The ataxia may occur due to acquired causes. The three major groups of this are as follows:

First, alcohol, long term with excess drinking of alcohol may cause persistent ataxia. But it can go away if one leaves alcohol drinking completely. Secondly, side effects from medicines may cause ataxia. It can be caused by sedatives such as Phenobarbital and benzodiazepines. In some cases, anti-seizure medicines like phenytoin and some types of chemotherapy can cause ataxia. Thirdly, toxins from heavy metal poisoning may



cause ataxia. Poisoning from lead or mercury and solvent poisoning, such as from paint thinner, also causes ataxia. Fourthly, too little or too much of certain vitamins can be causes for it.

In addition to inherited and acquired causes, ataxia can also happen due to a sporadic factor. These conditions happen because of spontaneous DNA mutations, which happen randomly as a foetus develops in the uterus. The mutations from these don't come from either of one's parents, and symptoms may appear when one is grown up.

Treatment and care of Ataxia

The treatment depends on the cause of its occurrence. If it is a temporary one like alcohol intoxication, it may not require any treatment, or it may need very mild treatment like intake of supplements for Vitamin B12. But in many cases, there is no determined treatment for ataxia. Patients should receive assistance in reducing their functional disability by providing medications for symptoms, counselling, and support groups. But research is going on to improve treatment further.



Creative pursuits like reading, playing music, and dancing could help delay brain aging

Story 2

A new study has observed that creative activities such as reading, playing musical instruments or singing, and playing video games can delay brain aging. The study was conducted by the Centre of Neurocognitive Research at SSWPS University in Poland. The importance of creative activities in improving brain health has already been observed by several past studies, and it is often believed to be true by the people. Also, doctors suggest that these activities be done for the patients whenever it is needed. But the recent discovery is special in the sense that it has found that involvement in creative activities is not only healthy for brains but also helps delay brain aging. More precisely the researchers have discovered that persons involved with long-term involvement in creative activities have, on average, a more youthful brain.

What is the problem of brain aging?

Simply, brain aging means a significant increase of age-related neurological disorders. The most common of these disorders include cognitive decline, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.

Research methodology

According to the report by Medical News Today or MNT, 3rd January 2026, the researchers analysed health data that includes neuroimaging of more than 1,400. These data were taken from as many as 13 countries. Among the participants, a section was considered as experts in dancing, music, visual arts, and action video game players.

The results and explanation of the research findings

Aneta Brzezicka, psychologist and head of the research Institute told MNT about the research findings. She said creative and artistic activities naturally combine many ingredients that are beneficial for the brain. They



were cognitively demanding, emotionally engaging, often social, and they required fine motor coordination. She also said that there had been a lot of interest in the arts and creativity as tools to promote wellbeing. But we would still know very little about whether they are linked to the slower biological aging of the brain itself.

She also added that scientists had utilized computational models called brain clocks to help them estimate each participant's brain age. Brain clocks are mathematical models or algorithms that learn how brain activity typically changes with age and then use this knowledge to estimate how old a new brain looks. Brzezicka explained, "In our case, we trained the clock on EEG (electroencephalogram) and MEG (magneto-encephalography) recordings from more than 1,200 people aged 17 to 91 from different countries".

She continued that when we had fed a new person's brain electrical activities into this model, it gave us a predicted "brain age". This was higher than the actual age that suggested accelerated brain aging. If slower, it would suggest brain aging more slowly. The difference between predicted and real age was called the "brain age gap."



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CSR Activities & Events of SERUM throughout January, 2026



Jan 1: Celebration of the Foundation Day of SERUM Group



Jan 3: Patna



Jan 4: North Bihar in Bhagalpur



Jan 5: Birthday celebration of Smt. Nivedita Acharya, Director, SERUM Group



Jan 11: Sri Sanjib Acharya at the Doctors & Lab Owners Meet held at Bahadurpur Road



Jan 18: All Bengal Sit & Draw and Recitation Competition, 2026



Jan 23: Birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose celebrated at the premises of Serum Auditorium



Jan 23: Saraswati Puja Celebration at Serum Auditorium



Jan 26: Celebrated Republic Day with pride and unity at the premises of Serum Auditorium



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