

## Call of WHO in 2013 "Measure Your Blood Pressure, Reduce Your Risk"

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World Health Day is celebrated on 7 April every year to mark the anniversary of the founding of World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948<sup>1</sup>. Each year, a theme is selected to highlight a priority area of public health concern in the world. This year 2013, the theme was "Measure Your Blood Pressure, Reduce Your Risk" which has been translated to local language, Bangla, as "Rokto Chap Niyontrone Jar: Nirapad Jibon Tar"<sup>1,2</sup>. WHO is calling for more efforts to prevent and control hypertension, also known as high blood pressure. Worldwide, more than one in three adults aged 25 years and over, or about one billion people are affected by hypertension<sup>1</sup>.

Hypertension is one of the most important risk factor to stroke and heart disease which together make up the world's number one cause of premature death and disability. It also increases the risk of kidney failure and blindness. High blood pressure contributes to nearly 9.4 million deaths from cardiovascular disease each year<sup>1</sup>. On this year's World Health Day, WHO is calling on all adults around the world to get their blood pressure measured. When people know their blood pressure level, they can take steps to control it. The prevalence of hypertension is highest in Africa (46% of adults) while the prevalence is found in the Americas (35% of adults). Overall, high-income countries have a lower prevalence of hypertension (35% of adults) than low and middle income groups (40% of adults).<sup>1</sup> Prevalence of hypertension in Bangladesh was found by Islam et al<sup>3</sup> (1975)- 15.41%, Sirajul Haque et al<sup>4</sup> (1997) - 22%, among urban population. In rural population of Bangladesh, prevalence was found by Malik et al<sup>5</sup>

(1976)- 1%, Islam et al<sup>6</sup> (1983)- 6.7%, Farooque QD & Sirajul Haque<sup>7</sup> (1994)- 20%. A meta analysis of 6 studies from 1976 to 1994 among 13288 population by Mostofa Zaman et al<sup>8</sup> found that prevalence was 13% in Bangladesh. Prevalence of Hypertension: NCD risk factor survey Bangladesh 2010 (aged 25 years or more) was found 19.9% in Urban area & 15.9% in Rural areas of Bangladesh<sup>9</sup>. This is more than the previous studies. With reference to the WHO Non-communicable Disease Risk Factors Survey 2010, one-third people in Bangladesh have never measured blood pressure in their lifetime. The burden of high blood pressure is being increased at an alarming rate from 8 percent in 1983 to 19 percent in 2012<sup>2</sup>. At present in the year 2013, an estimated 12 million adult people in Bangladesh suffer from high blood pressure, says a WHO study. It says 21% male and 18% female in urban areas suffer from high blood pressure, compared to 16% men and 15% women in rural areas<sup>2</sup>.

"Our aim today is to make people aware of the need to know their blood pressure, to take high blood pressure seriously, and then to take control," says Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO<sup>1</sup>. People can cut the risks of high blood pressure by: consuming less salt, eating a balanced diet, regular physical activity, avoiding all types of tobacco use and avoiding harmful use of alcohol. WHO supports national efforts to develop high-level policies and plans to prevent and control non-communicable diseases, as well as programs related to advocacy, community mobilization, environmental interventions, health system organization and delivery, legislation and regulation. The blood

pressure has been going up in Bangladesh mostly because of population ageing, unplanned urbanization, aggressive marketing of salty, sugary and fatty food, and sedentary lifestyle. High consumption of tobacco has been contributing to the complications of high blood pressure to a large extent. We are fortunate that our government start a strategic plan for Surveillance and Prevention of Non Communicable Diseases in Bangladesh (2011-2015) under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

A clarion call by WHO should be perceived by people, policy makers and patients for prevention of dreadful complications of hypertension. So first step of this approach is to record blood pressure and each individual should know his own blood pressure level and if his blood pressure is elevated, he should know his target or goal blood pressure with treatment.

#### Reference

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