Some Prevention Activities in Isfahan University of Medical Sciences

Seminar on "Urbanization and Diabetes"

The Provincial Health Center of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran organized a large gathering with about 700 participants on November 15, 2010. Directors of different organizations, public health policy makers, experts in various medical specialties, health professionals and health volunteers attended this seminar.

In his opening lecture, A/Prof. Shahin Shirani, Chancellor of IUMS, described the emerging epidemic of diabetes worldwide, and its highest burden in the Middle-eastern population in the near future. A/Prof. Kamal Heidari, Director of Isfahan Provincial Health Center and the Vice-chancellor for Health of IUMS explained the current national activities for prevention and control of diabetes mellitus. Dr. Ali Sajjadi, Deputy Director of Isfahan Provincial Health Center at IUMS described the on-going large program for diabetes prevention, screening and control in more than 800000 individuals aged 30+ in Isfahan province. He told that 17 public and private Health Promotion centers have been established in Isfahan, and are providing different levels of prevention at population level. Dr. Rashid Khodabakhsh, Director General of the Provincial Physical Education Organization had a comprehensive lecture on benefits of physical activity for prevention and control of diabetes mellitus. A/Prof. Ali Kachouei, endocrinologist at IUMS, talked about the importance of early diagnosis of diabetes mellitus and its self-control. A/Prof. Mehdi Salek, pediatrician at IUMS, had a presentation on diabetes mellitus in the pediatric age group.

Prof. Roya Kelishadi, pediatrician at IUMS, had a presentation on primordial/primary prevention of diabetes mellitus.

At the end of programs, special memorials were offered to the collaborators of the health programs related to diabetes.

Seminar on "Urbanization and Air Pollution"

Air pollution is a global health issue with severe public health implications.

In November and December 2010, some large metropolitan cities in Iran (notably Tehran and Isfahan) faced days of cold-air inversion and very unhealthy levels of air pollutants. The normal temperature (warm air below, cold air above) profile was reversed, and a stable alignment of dense, cold and polluted air existed below lighter, warm air. One of the several activities in this regard, was organizing a training seminar on December 8, 2010 for health professionals in Isfahan University of Medical Sciences (IUMS), Isfahan, Iran. This seminar aimed to increase the knowledge of health professionals, including physicians, nurses, health workers, and health volunteers about health effects of air pollution, diagnosis of its signs and symptoms, and the ways to reduce its harmful effects. The seminar had about 400 participants and its topics focused mainly on individuals at higher risk for health effects of air pollutants.

In his opening lecture, A/Prof. Kamal Heidari, Director of Isfahan Provincial Health Center and the Vice-chancellor for Health of IUMS described the broad activities conducted by the joint collaboration of IUMS health sectors with the Province Governorate, the Municipality, and other related organizations. He appreciated the hard work of his deputy, Dr. Ali Sajjadi in this regard. Engineer Ghatreh Samani, Director of the Meteorological Provincial Office explained issues on climate change and the current aerologic situation; Engineer Sadeghi, deputy of the Provincial Directorate of Environmental Protection described the annual air quality of the province and the current critical situation. Prof. Roya Kelishadi (from the Pediatrics department, IUMS) and A/Prof. Asadollah Asadian (from the Pulmonolgy Department, IUMS) described
the health hazards of air pollution for at-risk individuals as well as the ways to reduce these harmful effects.

The seminar guest was Prof. Ayoub Torkian, Director of the Water & Energy Research Center, the Center of Excellence on Air Pollution, Sharif University of Technology, Tehran. In his comprehensive lecture, he described different aspects of air pollution and its control.

In summary, the seminar focused on the importance of the emerging epidemic of chronic diseases in low- and middle-income countries, the vicious cycle of rapid urbanization and increasing levels of air pollution, and suggested that the regulatory policies for air quality protection should be integrated into the main priorities of primary health care system. The audience found the seminar very useful, and suggested to increase such educational activities and to pay more attention on environmental protection issues in the educational curriculum and continuous medical education (CME) programs of health professionals.

National seminar on "The Role of Breast Milk in Prevention of Non-communicable Diseases in Mothers and Infants"

Interest in primordial prevention of chronic non-communicable diseases (CNCDs) from early life is increasing. In addition to its several benefits, breast milk has a pivotal role in preventing chronic diseases. In order to emphasize on such long-term benefits of breast milk, a 2-day continuous medical education (CME) seminar was held on December 9-10, 2010 in the Isfahan University of Medical Sciences (IUMS), Isfahan, Iran.

This national seminar was organized by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the Iranian Breastfeeding Society, Pediatrics Department and the Provincial Health Center of IUMS. The seminar had about 400 participants consisting of physicians, nurses, midwives, health care providers and health volunteers. In the seminar's five panels and 12 lectures, the most recent scientific findings on the role of breast milk in preventing CNCDs for nursing mothers and breast-fed infants were discussed. The main focus was on the prevention of the commonest chronic diseases and disorders as obesity, osteoporosis, cardiovascular diseases, metabolic syndrome, diabetes mellitus, cancers, and psychological disorders, as well as allergic and autoimmune diseases.

In their opening lectures, A/Prof. Shahin Shirani, the IUMS Chancellor and A/Prof. Kamal Heidari, Director of the Provincial Health Center, IUMS emphasized on the necessity of primordial prevention of the growing problem of CNCDs in developing countries and the superiority of prevention to treatment of such diseases.

Prof. Alireza Marandi, neonatologist, the President of Iranian Academy of Medical Sciences and Director General of the Iranian Breastfeeding Society had a comprehensive lecture on the role of breastfeeding on disease prevention and health promotion in societies.

Dr. Hamed Barekati, pediatrician and Director of the Child Health Bureau, Ministry of Health and Medical Education presented the achievement and the future programs in promoting breastfeeding at national level.

Dr. Nahid Ezzedin Zanjani, pediatrician and the Director of the Iranian Breastfeeding Society described the national programs of this society and presented her lecture by focusing on benefits of breastfeeding for prevention of CNCDs in nursing mothers.
Faculty members of different Iranian universities presented their lectures on different aspects of breast milk in prevention of CNCDs. Prof. Behzad Shams, pediatrician at IUMS, and Advisory to the Minister of Health presented the child health programs in IUMS; Prof. Mahin Hashemipour, pediatric endocrinologist described the effects of breast milk for prevention of the metabolic syndrome and diabetes mellitus. Prof. Ahmadreza Farsar, pediatrician and Vice-Chancellor for Health at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran had a lecture on prevention of osteoporosis; Prof. Khalil Farivar, pediatrician at Mashad University of Medical Sciences had a general overview on the role of breastfeeding in disease prevention; A/Prof. Mahmoud Ravari, pediatrician at Arak University of Medical Sciences talked about the role of breastfeeding on prevention of autoimmune and allergic diseases. A/Prof. Hossein Saneian, pediatric gastroenterologist at IUMS presented recent findings on the effects of breastfeeding for prevention of overweight; A/Prof. Zohreh Badiei, neonotologist at IUMS had a presentation on the protective role of breast milk for dyslipidemia; A/Prof. Majid Mohammadi-zadeh, neonotologist at IUMS presented the latest findings on the benefits of breastfeeding for prevention of malignant diseases.

Prof. Roya Kelishadi, pediatrician at IUMS and the Secretary of the seminar presented the findings of national studies on the high prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors, and the protective role of breast feeding on the incidence of these risk factors among Iranian children and adolescents. She emphasized on the role of health professionals in counseling families about early life factors influencing adult diseases in their children.

In different panels, in addition to presenting the benefits of breast feeding on prevention of CNCDs, ways to overcome the challenges in following exclusive breast milk feeding in the first 6 months, and continued breastfeeding to 2 years of age were discussed. The panels were highlighted with an emphasis and in-depth analysis of the importance of breast feeding for primordial prevention of CNCDs.

Dr. Pezhan Aghdak, Head of the Bureau of Family & Population Health, Isfahan Provincial Health Office read the final statement of the seminar comprising 10 articles for promoting breast feeding and primordial prevention of CNCDs to be circulated by the Ministry of Health, and to be reinforced at national level.

Reviews of the seminar by the audience were extremely encouraging for organizers to proceed such activities. The seminar had media coverage at national level.