

Obesity is a major risk factor for diabetes; cardiovascular diseases (mainly heart disease and stroke); musculoskeletal disorders (especially osteoarthritis – a highly disabling degenerative disease of the joints); and some cancers (including endometrial, breast, ovarian, prostate, liver, gallbladder, kidney, and colon). An increased focus on nutrition by the health services is key to addressing both aspects of the “double-burden” of malnutrition. The Essential Nutrition Actions publication is a compilation of nutrition actions to address this “double burden” of underweight and overweight and provide a tool for countries to integrate nutrition interventions into their national health and development policies.

Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/04-09-2019-stronger-focus-on-nutrition-within-health-services-could-save-3.7-million-lives-by-2025>

WHO CALLS FOR URGENT ACTION TO REDUCE PATIENT HARM IN HEALTHCARE

13 September 2019 - Millions of patients are harmed each year due to unsafe health care worldwide resulting in 2.6 million deaths annually in low-and middle-income countries alone. Most of these deaths are avoidable. The personal, social and economic impact of patient harm leads to losses of trillions of US dollars worldwide. The World Health Organization is focusing global attention on the issue of patient safety and launching a campaign in solidarity with patients on the very first World Patient Safety Day on 17 September.

“No one should be harmed while receiving health care. And yet globally, at least 5 patients die every minute because of unsafe care,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. “We need a patient safety culture that promotes partnership with patients, encourages reporting and learning from errors, and creates a blame-free environment where health workers are empowered and trained to reduce errors.”

Four out of every ten patients are harmed during primary and ambulatory health care. The most detrimental errors are related to diagnosis, prescription and the use of medicines. Medication errors alone cost an estimated US\$ 42 billion annually. Unsafe surgical care procedures cause complications in up to 25% of patients resulting in 1 million deaths during or immediately after surgery annually.

Patient harm in health care is unacceptable. WHO is calling for urgent action by countries and partners around the world to reduce patient harm in health care. Patient safety and quality of care are essential for delivering effective health services and achieving universal health coverage.

Investment in improving patient safety can lead to significant financial savings. The cost of prevention is much lower than the cost of treatment due to harm. As an example, in the United States alone, focused safety improvements led to an estimated US\$28 billion in savings in Medicare hospitals between 2010 and 2015.

Greater patient involvement is the key to safer care. Engaging patients can reduce the burden of harm by up to 15%, saving billions of dollars each year.

On the very first World Patient Safety Day WHO is prioritizing patient safety as a global health priority and urging patients, healthcare workers, policy makers and health care industry to “Speak up for patient safety!”. Cities around the world will light up monuments in orange color to show their commitment to safety of patients on 17 September. These include the Jet d’Eau in Geneva, the Pyramids in Cairo, the Kuala Lumpur Tower, The Royal Opera House in Muscat, and the Zakim bridge in Boston among others. 17 September was established as World Patient Safety Day by the 72nd World Health Assembly in May 2019. More information about WHO’s campaign can be accessed at <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-patient-safety-day/2019>.

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