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SECRETARIAT ADDRESS:

Asia Pacific Pediatric Association (APPA)
3rd Floor, National Cancer Society Building
66, Jalan Raja Muda Abdul Aziz
50300 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
E-mail: appa.kl.secretariat@gmail.com
Website: www.a-p-p-a.org
Twitter: @Asiapacific_Ped
Facebook: facebook.com/Asia-Pacific-Pediatric-Association

AFFILIATED TO:

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Tel: 6011-3322 8830
Fax: 603-6730 9062
E-mail: suriatime@yahoo.com

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WORLD PNEUMONIA DAY

Pneumonia Is The Number One Killer Of Young Children



Photo by UNICEF

Pneumonia kills an estimated 1.4 million children under the age of 5 years, every year - more than deaths from AIDS, Malaria and TB combined. It accounts for 18% of all deaths of children under five years old worldwide. One child dies from pneumonia every 20 seconds. Most of these pneumonia deaths occur in developing countries.

In Malaysia, the prevalence of pneumonia in children under 5 years is between 28-39%. It is the fifth highest cause of death in Malaysian children, contributing 3.8% of under-5 deaths in 2006, and increasing to 5.1% in 2016.

For under-5 deaths due to pneumonia in 2016, Orang Asli (aboriginal) children had the highest risk of deaths. Non-citizens, Bumiputra (natives) in east Malaysian state of Sabah and "other Malaysian" children also had significantly higher risk of death due to pneumonia.

This global tragedy becomes even more depressing by the universal finding that only one in five caregivers could recognize the danger signs of pneumonia. Pneumonia often mimics the common cold, starting with a fever and cough and parents may not realise that the condition maybe much more serious than the flu. And only one in five children with pneumonia actually received life-saving antibiotics.

Child Survival Strategy Embraced Three Key Elements

The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF in their 2008 GAPP document outlined the Global Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Pneumonia. In summary, this child survival strategy embraced the following three key elements:

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APPA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Distinguished fellow pediatricians,

We have come to the last month of the year 2020. The year where we experienced SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. In this fast-changing time, when technologies are rapidly improved, even world-renowned scientists still need more time to work on the vaccines for the novel coronavirus.

We are optimistic that safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19, especially for children, will be successfully developed anytime soon.

The trial for COVID-19 vaccines had started in some countries. In some regions, the trial for phase three has been going on in adults. WHO projected that the vaccine would start as soon as next year. But there is still no vaccine available for children, at least until mid-2021. We have no choice but to keep the children healthy by teaching them to wash their hands regularly and wear masks properly (for older children and adolescents). We encourage pediatricians all over Asia Pacific region to educate parents to complete their children's vaccination amidst the pandemic situation. Double outbreak is something that we have to avoid during this pandemic.

From WHO situation report as of 29 November, 2020 there have been over 61.8 million cases and over 1.4 million deaths

reported globally since the start of the pandemic. Schools are forced to be closed again and some countries have been closing schools since the beginning of the pandemic. The resurgence of COVID-19 cases in some countries drives the lockdown to be reinstated. Lockdown situation must not prevent children from getting adequate nutrition. As parents and also pediatricians, we have to ensure the well-being of our children in lockdown.

These recent circumstances emphasized the seriousness of this pandemic, and I would like to express sincere encouragement and prayers to all of us. We must not lose our guard. Wearing masks, maintaining a safe distance with each other, and washing hands regularly is a new normal for all of us. Not to forget to avoid crowds, close contacts, and non-ventilated rooms. For fellow pediatricians who are still going to the clinic and hospitals, always remember to scrutinize our patients carefully: test, trace, and treat accordingly.

Aside from doing everything we can to overcome this pandemic, let us not forget to pray for the pandemic to be over and we can get through it safe and sound. Stay vigilant and keep in mind to look after each other in this holiday season.

Aman B Pulungan

President of Asia Pacific Pediatric Association



COVID-19 IN CHILDREN

CONSENSUS DOCUMENT ON MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 IN CHILDREN

The Pakistan Pediatric Association (PPA) PPA is happy to announce that a Consensus Document on **"Management of Covid-19 in Children"** prepared by PPA, Unicef and endorsed by the Ministry of Health in Pakistan, is now available online in Pakistan Pediatric Journal (PPJ).

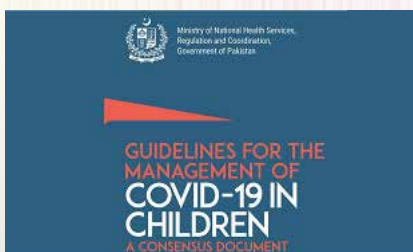
The reference is given as mentioned below.

"Guidance for the Management of Covid-19 in children

Pak Pediatr J 2020; 44(2): 218-52

Read Abstract

Download full article here: [Guidance for the Management of Covid-19 in children.pdf](https://13d97c9e-17fb-4523-87f2-3b40256b058b.usrfiles.com/ugd/13d97c_4fa73667dbdc4a6ab7100c88d45e92a5.pdf)".



https://13d97c9e-17fb-4523-87f2-3b40256b058b.usrfiles.com/ugd/13d97c_4fa73667dbdc4a6ab7100c88d45e92a5.pdf

This document was prepared over 3 months and is a collaborative effort of PPA and 3 teaching university hospitals in Pakistan.

Shorter version was printed on Boards and sent to all pediatricians in the country to display in their Pediatric clinics and wards.

Guidelines are divided into 5 modules which includes diagnosis to lab / radiology, proper PPE donning and doffing and management of children, new born and MISC.

PPA is in the process of training. So far 500 pediatricians have been trained in all 5 provinces and trickle down training will continue until we have trained all members of PPA as well as family practitioners.

These guidelines can be used by other societies, members of APPA.

Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Lakhani

Secretary General, PPA

September 19, 2020



- Protection by handwashing, exclusive breastfeeding, improved nutrition, avoidance of indoor pollution (smoking, stove fires) and reducing risk factors (eg HIV).
- Treatment by improving access to health care and appropriate management at health facilities.
- Prevention of pneumonia by immunising against germs that are responsible, eg measles, pertussis, influenza, haemophilus influenza B (Hib) and pneumococcus.

The implementation of the GAPP interventions to Protect (breastfeeding), Prevent (vaccinations) and Treat (case management) in the 68 high child mortality countries would potentially avert up to 1.2 million post-neonatal pneumonia deaths annually by 2015, significantly contributing to MDG4.

The prevention strategy with “pneumonia vaccines” have been shown to substantially reduce pneumonia morbidity and mortality in children. Malaysia introduced the pertussis, measles, Hib and pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCV) in the Ministry of Health (MOH), National Immunisation Program (NIP) in 1960, 1982, 2002 and 2020 respectively. The influenza vaccine is not in the NIP.

The Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA) and its partners championed for the inclusion of the PCV, the latest “pneumonia vaccine” in the NIP since 2005. It was included in 2020 Budget, by the former Pakatan Harapan government with a kick-start budget of RM60 million. The PCV prevents against the pneumococcus which is the number one cause of pneumonia deaths. More than 50% of pneumonia deaths are due to the pneumococcus.

The Pneumococcus Can Cause Other Serious Diseases

Apart from pneumonia, the pneumococcus can cause other serious diseases namely meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the spine and brain), bacteraemia (germs in the blood) and other less invasive but nonetheless very burdensome in terms of volume of morbidity and complications - otitis media (inflammation of the middle ear) and sinusitis (infection of the sinuses).

For every case of pneumococcal meningitis each year, there are probably 1,000 cases of pneumococcal otitis media. The two cases below illustrate the spectrum of diseases caused by the pneumococcus:

Case 1: A 3-year-old girl presented with a three-week history of coughing and six days’ of high grade fever. She did not respond to oral antibiotics and was referred to hospital. On admission she was febrile, breathing rapidly and was grunting. Her Chest X-rays (CXR) showed pneumonia of the entire right lung, with fluid collection. The lung fluid was drained and it grew the pneumococcus. She required respiratory support in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for 5 days, oxygen for another five days. Her repeat CXR showed residual lung damage and she was in hospital for a total of four weeks.

Case 2: The second case a five-month-old girl was less fortunate. She had fever 36 hours prior to admission, was feeding poorly and vomited twice. She was noted to be more sleepy. Both her blood and cerebrospinal fluid grew

pneumococcus. Despite ventilation in the ICU, intravenous antibiotics and close monitoring, she died within 10 hours from pneumococcal septicaemia and meningitis. Thus vaccination against invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) is a pivotal life-saving strategy and reduces morbidity because:

- it may prevent children from ever being infected
- it reduces transmission of the bacteria in the community, thus reducing IPD in the other age groups (herd immunity) and
- it reduces the need for antibiotics, resulting in lower rates of resistant bacteria.

The pneumococcal vaccine first introduced in the USA in 2000 has since been shown to be highly efficacious in a wide variety of populations studied in the USA, American Indians, Gambia and South Africa.

PCV, First Vaccine in 20 Years to Show Significant Reduction in All-cause of Child Mortality

The pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) is the first vaccine in 20 years to show a significant reduction in all-cause child mortality in a major randomised, controlled clinical trial in Gambia, where seven deaths were prevented for every 1000 children vaccinated.

The WHO in a position statement in 2007 declared: “Recognizing the heavy burden of pneumococcal disease in children and the safety and efficacy of PCV7 in this age group, WHO considers the inclusion of this vaccine in national immunisation programs as a priority.”

Since the arrival of the PCV to Malaysia in October 2005, only about 15% of our birth cohort have been vaccinated against the pneumococcus, and virtually all of these were in the private health sector.

The Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA), namely its Treasurer Dr. Musa Mohd Nordin and former President Dr. Zulkifli Ismail who is currently the Asia Pacific Pediatric Association (APPA) Secretary General, are both co-founders of the Asian Strategic Alliance for Pneumococcal disease prevention (ASAP) that has been at the forefront in the advocacy for the inclusion of PCV in the NIP of countries in the Asia Pacific. Dr. Zulkifli Ismail also served as former Chairperson of ASAP.

The MPA and ASAP, were part of the Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia (GCCP) established in 2009, to advocate for global action to protect against, effectively treat and help prevent pneumonia.

The Global Coalition Against Child Pneumonia Annual Event, The World Pneumonia Day (Wpd), Which Falls Every Year on 12 November, was a call to address and to raise awareness about the increasing toll of pneumonia on children which the WHO and UNICEF appropriately labelled as the “Forgotten Killer of Children”. Let us together “Fight Pneumonia. And Save a Child”.

- codeblue.galencentre.org, November 12, 2020

Dr. Musa Mohd Nordin is Treasurer of Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA) and Co-founder of ASAP. Dr. Husna Musa is a Paediatrician at University Putra Malaysia.



COVID-19 UNDERFED CHILDREN

An extra 10,000 children per month may die this year (2020) from malnutrition due to the COVID-19 crisis, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Wednesday (October 14, 2020).

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a UN Food and Agriculture (FAO) conference that due to the pandemic he expected a 14% rise in cases of severe child malnutrition this year - or 6.7 million more people - mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

"We cannot accept a world where the rich have access to healthy diets while the poor are left behind... the rich can afford to stay home, the poor must go out to work," he said.

After the economic devastation of the pandemic, governments must work with the private sector and civil society to support sustainable food systems and end subsidies for producers of unhealthy foods, the WHO Director-General added. Millions of lives could be saved if countries expanded childhood feeding programmes, reduced marketing of unhealthy foods and used fiscal policies to drive better food choices amongst consumers, he said.

Thousands More Underfed Children May Die Due To COVID-19



A 2-year-old Yemeni boy suffering from malnutrition is weighed at a hospital in the northwestern Hajjah province. (AFP pic)

"COVID has reminded us that life is fragile, health is precious, and healthy diets are not just for the wealthy, they're a human right," he said.

"The pandemic has caused serious disruptions to essential services, immunisation, maternal services, child nutrition, family planning and more."

- Reuters, London, October 14, 2020



INFANT FOODS

Cambodia: Stronger Regulation Of Infant Foods Done To Protect Children's Health



A face mask-clad student walking through a gate equipped with disinfectant spray as part of measures against the COVID-19 in Phnom Penh on Monday (September 7), as schools reopen across the country. - AFP

The World Health Organization (WHO), along with two international organisations on Tuesday (September 8, 2020) commended Cambodia for taking actions in regulating Breast Milk Substitutes (BMS) and responding to parents' complaints promptly.

"We greatly appreciate the government's swift action to suspend the sale of BMS

products from companies failing to meet international standards to protect the health and well-being of children and their mothers," said a joint statement released by the WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Helen Keller International (HKI).

The statement was signed by Li Ailan, representative of WHO-Cambodia, Foroogh Foyouzat, representative of UNICEF-Cambodia, and Gwyneth Cotes, country director of HKI-Cambodia. "We are also concerned by the results of the recent investigation of infant formula milk powder produced by Nutrilatt," it said.

The result of the independent laboratory tests revealed inadequate levels of iron and zinc in the company's infant

formula milk powder, the statement said, adding that this is a reminder of the crucial importance of robust regulation of BMS products.

The statement said micronutrients like iron and zinc are critical for the health and development of children, and insufficient levels in children can lead to lifelong impaired physical and cognitive growth. "We request the government to arrange for affected children and their families to receive appropriate care and support," it said.

Exclusive Breastfeeding the Best Way to Feed Infants

The statement said global evidence shows that exclusive breastfeeding remains the best way to feed infants. Where BMS products are used, they need to be rigorously regulated according to the international standards and Cambodian law.

"Failure to do so, along with their inappropriate use, puts children's lives at risk," it said. "Ensuring children have access to safe, affordable, appropriate, nutritious products that are adequately regulated by the government is crucial to protect their well-being."

Until they reach six months, babies should only receive breast milk to ensure all the nutrients they need to grow well and be healthy, the statement said, adding that from the age of six months, children should begin eating safe and adequate complementary foods alongside continued breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond.

- Xinhua News Agency, Phnom Penh, September 8, 2021



SINGAPORE STUDIES COVID-19 PREGNANCY PUZZLE AFTER BABY BORN WITH ANTIBODIES

Doctors are studying the impact of COVID-19 on pregnant women and their unborn babies in Singapore, where an infant delivered by an infected mother earlier this month had antibodies against the virus but did not carry the disease.

The ongoing study among the city-state's public hospitals adds to international efforts to better understand whether the infection or antibodies can be transferred during pregnancy, and if the latter offers an effective shield against the virus.



FILE PHOTO: A 3D-printed coronavirus model is seen in front of a stock graph on display in this illustration

The World Health Organization says while some pregnant women have an increased risk of developing severe COVID-19, it is not yet known whether an infected pregnant woman can pass the virus to her foetus or baby during pregnancy or delivery.

A Singaporean woman, infected with the coronavirus in March 2020 when she was pregnant, told local newspaper the Straits Times that doctors said her infant son had antibodies against the virus but was born without the infection.

"It is still unknown whether the presence of these antibodies in a newborn baby confers a degree of protection against COVID-19 infection, much less the duration of protection," said Tan Hak Koon, chairman of the Obstetrics and Gynaecology division at KK Women's and Children's Hospital.

KK is One of The Hospitals Involved in The Study of Infected Pregnant Women in Singapore

KK is one of the hospitals involved in the study of infected pregnant women in Singapore, details of which surfaced after the case of the baby born with antibodies was made public.

The National University Hospital (NUH), another hospital involved, said the study looks at the effects of COVID-19 on pregnant women, their foetus and outcomes after delivery.

Doctors in China reported the detection and decline over time of COVID-19 antibodies in babies born to women with the coronavirus disease, according to an article published in October in the journal Emerging Infectious Diseases.

While there is evidence that transmission during pregnancy is rare, a small study in Italy suggested that it is possible, according to research published in the Nature journal in October 2020. <https://bit.ly/2Vu22vH>

Other studies have shown COVID-19 antibodies can be passed to a child via breastfeeding, while KK's Tan said there was evidence they could pass during pregnancy through the placenta to the baby.

Paul Tambyah, one of city-state's leading disease experts, said it was encouraging that antibodies were present in the Singapore baby months after the mother's infection, adding to broader evidence that they offer some protection from the virus.

"Worldwide there have been millions of people infected, including probably thousands of pregnant women, with very few reports of infections in very young babies. This suggests that there might be some protection from maternal antibodies and breast feeding," said Tambyah, President of the Asia Pacific Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infection.

- Reuters, Singapore, November 30, 2020





150 Million Additional Children Plunged Into Poverty Due To COVID-19, Unicef, Save The Children Say

New analysis reveals the number of children living in multidimensional poverty - without access to education, health, housing, nutrition, sanitation, or water - has increased by 15 per cent since the start of the pandemic



UNICEF/UN0271873/Pirozzi

The number of children living in multidimensional poverty has soared to approximately 1.2 billion due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new UNICEF and Save the Children analysis published today (September 17, 2020).

This is a 15 per cent increase in the number of children living in deprivation in low- and middle-income countries, or an additional 150 million children since the pandemic hit earlier this year.

The multidimensional poverty analysis uses data on access to education, healthcare, housing, nutrition, sanitation and water from more than 70 countries. It highlights that around 45 per cent of children were severely deprived of at least one of these critical needs in the countries analyzed before the pandemic.

Although the analysis paints a dire picture already, UNICEF warns the situation will likely worsen in the months to come. Save the Children and UNICEF are committed to continue to monitor this evolving situation and work with governments and civil society to confront it.

"COVID-19 and the lockdown measures imposed to prevent its spread have pushed millions of children deeper into poverty," said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director. "Families on the cusp of escaping poverty have been pulled back in, while others are experiencing levels of deprivation they have never seen before. Most concerning, we are closer to the beginning of this crisis than its end."

Child Poverty Much More Than a Monetary Value

The report notes that child poverty is much more than a monetary value. Although measures of monetary poverty such as household income are important, they provide only a partial view of the plight of children living in poverty. To understand the full extent of child poverty, all potential deprivations must be analysed directly. This also points to the need to implement multi-sectoral policies addressing health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation and housing deprivations to end multidimensional poverty.

Social protection, inclusive fiscal policies, investments in social services, and employment and labor market interventions to support families are critical to lifting children out of poverty and preventing further devastation. This includes expanding access to quality health care and providing the tools and technology needed for children to continue their education remotely; and investing in family-friendly policies such as paid leave and child care.

"This pandemic has already caused the biggest global education emergency in history, and the increase in poverty will make it very hard for the most vulnerable children and their families to make up for the loss," said Inger Ashing, CEO of Save the Children. "Children who lose out on education are more likely to be forced into child labour or early marriage and be trapped in a cycle of poverty for years to come. We cannot afford to let a whole generation of children become victims of this pandemic. National governments and the international community must step up to soften the blow."

Poorest Children are Getting Poorer

There are not only more children experiencing poverty than before, the poorest children are getting poorer as well, the report notes. Some children may suffer one or more deprivations and others experience none at all, therefore the average number of deprivations suffered per child can be used to assess how poor children are.

Before the pandemic, the average number of severe deprivations per child was around 0.7. It is now estimated to have increased by 15 per cent to around 0.85.

"We must act now to prevent additional children from being deprived in basic life needs like school, medicine, food, water and shelter," said Fore. "Governments must prioritize the most marginalized children and their families through rapid expansion of social protection systems including cash transfers and child benefits, remote learning opportunities, healthcare services and school feeding. Making these critical investments now can help countries to prepare for future shocks."

- UNICEF, New York, London, September 17, 2020



COVID-19 RECOGNITION

MALAYSIAN HOSPITAL TEAM WINS GLOBAL RECOGNITION IN BATTLING COVID-19



Malaysian Sungai Buloh Hospital

The COVID-19 team at Sungai Buloh Hospital in west coast Selangor state, was recognised at the Global Health Awards 2020 recently for its unwavering efforts in battling the pandemic.

Director-General of Health Dr. Noor Hisham Abdullah congratulated the Head of Hospital Sungai Buloh Infectious Disease Department, Dr. Suresh Kumar, and Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Department Head Dr. Shaiful Azman Zakaria as well as the hospital's COVID-19 team for the recognition.

According to the Global Health Awards website, the regional Asia-Pacific awards are aimed at recognising companies in various regional and global markets that have consistently maintained high standards in delivering quality care and pushed the boundaries of delighting their customers at every stage and in every interaction.

Hospital Sungai Buloh was designated as Malaysia's main COVID-19 hospital in March.

- **Bernama (Malaysian National News Agency), Kuala Lumpur, November 2, 2020**



COVID-19 SCHOOLS

WHO Says Children Do Play A Role In Coronavirus Spread, But Schools Are Not A 'Main Contributor'

The World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Thursday (August 2020) that an increasing body of evidence suggests children do play a role in the spread of COVID-19, but classrooms are not thought to be a "main contributor" to the pandemic.

It comes as students prepare to return to school both in person and online after the summer holidays, with authorities across the U.S, Europe and elsewhere trying to orchestrate a delicate balancing act.

Many are asking whether restarting the new academic year with robust mitigation measures may be worth the risk to students, teachers and families, given that keeping schools closed could exacerbate learning gaps exposed by lockdown measures.

During a press briefing on Thursday, Hans Kluge, regional director for Europe at the WHO said that, so far, school settings had not been a "main contributor" to the pandemic.

"There's also more and more publications that adds to the body of evidence that children do play a role in the transmission but that this is, so far, more linked with social

gatherings," Kluge said. "So, this is one of the unknowns but definitely top priorities for the policymakers at the World Health Organization."

To date, more than 24.2 million people have contracted the coronavirus worldwide, with 826,368 related deaths, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

- **cnbc.com, August 27, 2020**



George Frey | Bloomberg via Getty Images

Students wearing protective masks raise their hands in a classroom as a teacher gives a lesson remotely at a public charter school in Provo, Utah, U.S., on Thursday, August 20, 2020.



57th PPS

57th Philippine Pediatric Society ANNUAL CONVENTION

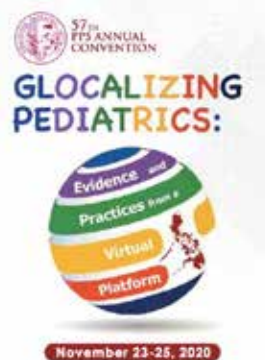
The Philippine Pediatric Society has just concluded its 57th Annual Convention presented virtually. The convention drew over 6,000 members and child advocates in attendance who had been waiting for this offering. The convention had been slated in April 2020. However, due to the current situation in the country, it was decided to take it into the online stage.

The Opening Ceremonies were led by the PPS President, Dr. Joselyn A. Eusebio. Awarded as the Most Outstanding Pediatrician was Dr. Socorro Mendoza for her commitment and leadership for the Kangaroo Mother Care Program. PPS Past President Dr. Milagros S. Bautista began the plenary lecture topic on When PROD becomes PRID: Handling Pediatric Residents in Distress.

Other plenary topics included Telepediatrics: Technology meets Child Care; Compassion Fatigue Among Healthcare Providers; E-Learning for Pediatric Residents in the New Normal; Ethics in Allocating Scarce Resources; The Current Status of Pediatric Covid-19 in the Philippines. Our online platform housed the lectures and will be open for viewing by our attendees. This also has been assigned continuing professional development units as requirement for our members. The country is still in community quarantine. Thus, this method of delivery as our members also went on with their daily rounds and clinics. It seems that we will, presently

continue with this type of engagement for our members. We look forward to next year's scheduled convention in July 2021.

- **Maria Christina H. Ventura, MD (Editor, PPS Newsletter)**



Joselyn A. Eusebio,
MD, FPPS President,
Philippine Pediatric
Society



57th Annual Convention Organizing Committee
convention.pps.org.ph



EUTHANASIA

Dutch To Make Euthanasia Legal For Terminally-ill Kids

Holland moved towards making euthanasia legal for terminally-ill children aged between one and 12 after the coalition government on Tuesday (October 13, 2020) backed the move.

Health Minister Hugo de Jonge said he would now draft regulations for the practice, after a study by experts showed some children were suffering "hopelessly".

Euthanasia is currently legal for children older than 12 who can give their consent, and for babies up to a year old with their parents' consent. But there is no legal provision for children in between, due to debate among Dutch authorities about whether minors of those ages were capable of making the decision.

De Jonge said a study conducted by medical experts, ordered by his ministry, showed that around five to 10 children a year would be involved by the rule change.

"The study shows that there is a need for active termination of life among doctors and parents of incurably ill children, who are suffering hopelessly and unbearably and will die within the foreseeable future," De Jonge said in a letter to parliament.

Ministers in Prime Minister Mark Rutte's coalition government finally agreed on the step on Tuesday after months of disagreement, with strong opposition from Christian parties.

Doctors Would Be Exempted From Prosecution for Carrying Out Approved Euthanasia

Current laws would not need to be changed, but doctors would be exempted from prosecution for carrying out an approved euthanasia on a suffering child, De Jonge said.

The Dutch parliament is set to again discuss the matter during a debate Thursday, with government expected to implement the regulation within the next few months.

Holland and neighbouring Belgium became the first countries in the world to legalise euthanasia in 2002.

Belgium in 2014 was the first country to allow for voluntary child euthanasia, followed by Holland.

- **AFP, The Hague, October 14, 2020**



Euthanasia is currently legal for children older than 12 who can give their consent in Holland. (AFP pic)



A Vicious Circle: How Bullying Can Lead To Violence At Home

With the International Day Against Violence and Bullying at school, including cyberbullying (November 5, 2020) being observed this week, data from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) shows that one third of children worldwide (some 246 million kids) have recently experienced bullying in or around school.

The problem prevails around the world and researchers are studying possible avenues of preventative action to tackle it. A new study from the University of Córdoba in Spain and the UK's University of Cambridge offers some insight.



Research showed that being a victim of repeated bullying was an additional risk factor for developing violent behaviour at home and/or at school. - IStock.com/AFP pic

Published in Science Direct, this new study examines the risk factors for violent behavior in adolescents. "These behaviors refer to, for instance, troubling behavior at home, including physical violence towards parents and siblings, at school, including physical violence towards teaching staff and schoolmates, and other settings, including bad behavior in public," explains Raquel Espejo Siles, doctoral student at the University of Córdoba who carried out this research during her stay at the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge.

The study focused on 871 students age 10 to 17 attending various educational centers in Andalusia, Spain. Participants were asked to complete two questionnaires one year apart (June 2017, then June 2018).

"We found that violence used directly towards people was related to a tendency to make impulsive decisions and to a blind motivation to accomplish one's aims, without regard for the disadvantages or negative consequences from using violence," explains Raquel Espejo.

The research also showed that being a victim of repeated bullying was an additional risk factor for developing violent behavior at home and/or at school, in particular for younger and male participants.

Identifying and tackling violent behaviour

According to the study, certain social and emotional competencies - such as empathy, self-management, motivation and decision-making - can be effective protective factors against violence in children. In this respect, the study authors highlight the role of parents and educators in teaching these social and emotional skills to children and adolescents.

"It is important to prevent violence, both victimisation and bullying, since the data found in this study and others indicate that violence is a vicious cycle. Being the aggressor or the victim entails a high risk of developing the opposite role, reinforcing and increasing violence both at school and outside of school," explains Raquel Espejo.

The researcher also highlights the need to encourage adolescents to reassess their goals and the consequences of their violent behaviour. Moreover, the study concludes that teaching strategies to resolve issues in other ways could help adolescents to compare and see the high individual and social cost of violent behaviour.

- AFP-Relaxnews, Madrid, November 7, 2020

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAVE
A HAPPY, BLESSED, SAFE AND HEALTHY
2021.**

**MAY GOD PROTECT ALL OF US FROM COVID-19.
STAY SAFE.**



Malaysia Launches Mental Health Helpline for Children



Malaysia has launched its first helpline dedicated to children's mental health in response to the increased stress faced by the nation's youths during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Buddy Bear helpline, launched by social enterprise HumanKind, lets children speak to professionally trained volunteers about social and emotional issues they may have, which can evolve into serious mental health problems if unaddressed.

Pam Guneratnam, Buddy Bear founder, said this helpline is uniquely designed to cater to children's needs. It provides judgment-free space for callers, she said, with responders taught to respond with empathy.

She said all volunteers were vetted through numerous interviews, training sessions and background checks to ensure the callers' safety. Pam Guneratnam said "children are usually brought into crisis centres by parents", usually due to behavioural difficulties. Buddy Bear provides children with the "agency to ask for help themselves".

Mental Health Crisis Due to Extended Isolation Could Become the Next Pandemic

A child and adolescent psychiatrist, who identified herself only as Anita, said the mental health crisis caused by extended isolation could become the next pandemic. "All experts agree, we have not prepared for this," she said.

Anita said the physical lockdown and lack of social interaction with peers and teachers could manifest in the future as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, substance abuse and obsessive-compulsive disorder, among other forms of mental illness.

"The psychological impacts will be huge, I can't even fathom," she said. She said parents must lead by example. "If we can't take care of our own mental health, how do we expect our kids to learn?"

The Helpline as an Invaluable Avenue for Seeking Assistance

PH Wong, founder of Childline Foundation Malaysia, said this helpline would give children an invaluable avenue for seeking assistance as a last resort, but added that more needed to be done to minimise the number of cases.



Pam Guneratnam.
Photo by
Free Malaysia Today

"We have child protection policies, but we need to also invest in high-quality care and education services to prevent these problems in the first place."

She said better support networks should be established at home, in the community and in schools, so that these avenues are easily accessible to children.

The Buddy Bear helpline number can be reached at 1800 18 BEAR (2327) and is available everyday between noon and midnight. Volunteers speak English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil languages.

- freemalaysiatoday.com, September 4, 2020



INTERNATIONAL PAEDIATRIC EVENTS

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, conferences in many countries have either been re-scheduled, postponed to 2021, 2022, cancelled or will be held as scheduled. Please confirm with organisers.

Note:

These paediatric events are for information purposes and does not constitute any endorsements from the APPA Secretariat.

SINGAPORE

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) Conference Singapore, March 6-7 2021 in conjunction with the 9th Singapore Paediatric & Perinatal Annual Congress

Theme: "Learning together to improve child health"

Date: March 6-7, 2021

Venue: Singapore

Time: 0900hrs-1700hrs (Singapore Standard Time - SGT - is eight hours ahead of GMT)

Email: cpchs@ams.edu.sg

(A virtual conference connecting members and colleagues)

2021

NEW ZEALAND

72nd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Paediatric Society of New Zealand Inc.

Date: November 2-5, 2021

Venue: Rotarua, New Zealand

Website: www.paediatrics.org.nz

ITALY

2020 First Steps in Neonatal Brain Ultrasound: An Amazing, Adventurous Journey!

Date: March 2021 (Dates to be decided later)

Venue: Palazzo Ricasoli Polihotels, Florence, Italy.

E-mail: ultrasound2020@aimgroup.eu

Website: web.aimgroupinternational.com/2020/ultrasound

2020 Neonatal Ultrasound Course: Why, How and When an Ultrasound Image?

Date: March 2021 (Dates to be decided later)

Venue: Palazzo Ricasoli Polihotels, Florence, Italy.

E-mail: ultrasound2020@aimgroup.eu

Website: web.aimgroupinternational.com/2020/ultrasound

EGYPT

12th ISTP of International Society of Tropical Pediatrics (ISTP)

Date: November 23-27, 2021

Venue: Intercontinental City Stars Hotel, Cairo, Egypt

E-mail: contact@iccgroupp.com / operations@iccgroupp.com

Latest Information: www.ictp.2020.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ictp2020

JAPAN

The 124th Annual Meeting of the Japan Pediatric Society (JPS)

Date: April 16-18, 20A21

Venue: Kyoto International Conference Center

Website: (https://www.icckkyoto.or.jp/en/)

MALAYSIA

11th Asia Pacific Paediatric Endocrine Society (APPES) Biennial Scientific Meeting in conjunction with the 42nd Annual Conference of the Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA)

Theme: "Towards Best Practices in Paediatric Endocrine Disorders & Diabetes."

Date: November 25-28, 2021

Venue: Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

E-mail: secretariat@appes2020.org

Website: jspe.umin.jp/kanren/files/APPES2020.pdf

Tel: 603-7931 2131 **Fax:** 603-7932 2132

NETHERLAND

European Academy of Pediatrics (EAP) 2021 Congress & Master Course

Date: April 22-25, 2021

Venue: Amsterdam, Netherlands

E-mail: congress@eapaediatrics.eu / eap.congress.org

(Congress & Master Course will be held on a virtual platform)

2022

PAKISTAN

The 17th Asia Pacific Congress of Pediatrics (APCP)

Organised and hosted by the Pakistan Pediatric Association (PPA)

Theme: "Every New Born, Every Child, Every Where"

Date: October 15-17, 2021

Venue: Lahore, Pakistan

Website: www.ppa.org.pk/apcp

VIETNAM

The 17th ASEAN Pediatric Federation Congress (APFC) 2020 & The 23rd Annual Congress of Vietnam Pediatric Association (VPA)

Theme: "Assuring Equal Access To Quality Healthcare Services For All Children"

Hosted by the: Vietnam Pediatric Association (VPA)

Date: (To be confirmed)

Venue: Hanoi, Vietnam

Email: secretariat.apfc2020@gmail.com



17th Asia Pacific
Congress of Pediatrics 21
Lahore, Pakistan | 15th - 17th October, 2021
Theme: Every New Born, Every Child, Every Where



IPA CONGRESS 2021 POSTPONED

As per the decision of the IPA Standing Committee which met virtually on 26-27 September 2020, keeping in view of the ongoing SARS-CoV2 pandemic, IPA will not hold its 30th International Pediatric Congress (IPA2021) which was scheduled to be held on 22-26 August 2021 in Glasgow.
New dates for the congress will be announced soon.

