



# THE PUBLIC HEALTH WIRE

Newsletter of the Global Institute of Public Health



Women's Day Edition

07 April 2025

Issue 004

## Is there a female condom? Have you ever seen this?

*The female condom:  
A lesser-known shield for safe sex!*

Internal condoms — also called “female” condoms — are little nitrile (soft plastic) pouches that you put inside your vagina. They cover the inside of your vagina, creating a barrier that stops sperm from reaching an egg. The internal condom also helps prevent sexually transmitted infections. The female condom was invented in 1990 by Danish Physician Lasse Hessel and approved for sale in the United States by the FDA in 1993. They are sold under many brand names including Reality, Femidom, Dominique, Femy, Myfemy, Protectiv, and Care.



## Can You get tuberculosis (TB) by touching someone with the disease?

Tuberculosis (TB) is primarily spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is not transmitted by casual contact, such as touching surfaces or shaking hands. TB bacteria need to enter the lungs, typically through the inhalation of droplets, to cause an infection. So, there is no transmission of TB through the skin. However, it's important to maintain good hygiene and avoid close contact with active TB patients to minimize the risk.

## Can women with HIV have pregnancy? Is it safe?

Yes, HIV-positive women can conceive and have healthy pregnancies with proper medical care. With advances in treatment, including antiretroviral therapy (ART), the risk of transmitting the virus to the baby can be reduced significantly. Pregnant women with HIV can take ART to maintain a low viral load, and with the right precautions, such as a planned caesarean delivery and avoiding breastfeeding, they can protect their babies from HIV.

## Read Smart. Win Hard. Cash Awaits the Curious!



Dr. Ruma Bhargava, Founder, Samarpann, Geneva, Switzerland

## Samarpann- Helping girls stay in school with better period care

Samarpann is leading the introduction of Period Underwears in rural India, revolutionizing menstrual hygiene management for young girls. By addressing affordability, accessibility, and sustainability, we provide a dignified and long-lasting solution. Through partnerships with CSR initiatives, we have reached 7,000 girls across Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, ensuring that menstrual health does not disrupt their education. With a lifespan of 3-5 years, this innovation reduces waste, breaks taboos, and fosters awareness and confidence. Our commitment remains strong—“to empower every girl with the resources she needs to pursue her dreams without barriers.”



NASA astronaut Sunita Williams, after spending 286 days aboard the International Space Station (ISS), is encountering several health challenges upon her return to Earth. Extended exposure to microgravity has led to muscle atrophy, bone density loss, and cardiovascular issues. Williams has also experienced significant weight loss and changes in appearance, including greying hair. These health effects underscore the physiological toll of prolonged space missions on astronauts.

## Sunita Williams - Did she face any health challenges after the extended space mission?

## Who is the WHO Director General? Do you have to be a doctor to become the WHO Director General?



The current World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General is Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, hailing from Ethiopia. With an impressive background in public health, Dr. Tedros is the first African to lead the WHO. He holds a Doctorate in Philosophy (PhD) in Community Health from the University of Nottingham, alongside a Master's in Public Health. He is not trained as a physician and one doesn't have to be a doctor to become the Director General of the WHO, as many of us believe. His leadership has been crucial in global health responses, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Is HIV high or low for women in India?



### HIV in India: Men at higher risk than women, says report

According to NACO, the estimated adult HIV prevalence in India in 2019 was 0.22% overall, with adult males at 0.24% and adult females at 0.20%, indicating a slightly higher prevalence among men than women.



## Can vaccines prevent cancer in women?

*How a simple vaccine can help  
protect women from cancer!*

The HPV vaccine protects against the types of HPV that most often cause cervical, vaginal and vulvar cancers, as well as other HPV related cancers like anal and oropharyngeal cancers. HPV vaccination is recommended for preteens aged 11 to 12 years, but can be given starting at age 9. It is also recommended for everyone through age 26 years, if they are not vaccinated already.



## GIPH- Corner

We are privileged to present our esteemed guest speakers who have contributed as visiting faculty at GIPH. Acclaimed in their areas of expertise, they have shared a vast array of knowledge, innovative ideas, and international viewpoints- sparking intellectual curiosity, fostering meaningful discussions, and enhancing our academic community with exceptional learning experiences.

Dr.Madhav Ram Balakrishnan, Dr.Rajesh Divakaran (Geneva, Switzerland), Dr.Sandhya Sukumaran (USA), Dr.Anjum, Dr.Benny, Dr.Rakesh (USA), Dr.Babu Ramachandran (Bahrain), Dr.Lakshmi Mohan, Shri. Maitreyan, Dr.Tom Joseph, Dr.A.V. Anoop, Dr.Sam Prasad, Dr.Sonia George, Smt. Sreedevi Pillai, Dr.Jayasree A.K., Dr.Shaheer Aboobacker, Shri. Sanju Soman, Dr.Nirmal (USA), Smt. Supriya Anil, Dr.Anand, Dr.Revathy Remachandran, and Prof. Prakash.

## Menstrual cups instead of pads - which is better and safer?

*Menstrual Cups: A safe, cost-effective, and eco-friendly period solution*

Menstrual cups are safe, reusable alternatives to pads and tampons. Made from medical-grade silicone, they collect blood instead of absorbing it and can hold more than most tampons. When used correctly and cleaned regularly, they are low-risk and can last for years, making them cost-effective and eco-friendly. A woman switching to a menstrual cup could reduce her carbon footprint by 16 times, saving about 7 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> yearly. Just choose a trusted brand, follow instructions, and enjoy a sustainable period solution!



## Keto diet - Does it really work? Is it safe?

*Smart tips for shedding pounds: Is the keto diet right for you?*

To reduce weight, focus on a balanced diet, regular exercise, portion control and calorie control, limit processed food, get enough sleep and manage stress. A keto diet is a very low-carbohydrate, high-fat diet that forces the body to burn fat for energy instead of carbohydrates. The keto diet can be restrictive and difficult to maintain long-term. Consult a professional before starting any new diet, especially a restrictive one like keto. This diet might not be suitable for everyone, especially those with certain medical conditions.



### EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

We are thrilled to bring you another edition of our newsletter! In this issue, we're excited to unveil a new feature: Interview with the Doctor. This ongoing column will present discussions with top medical professionals and health experts, providing valuable insights into important topics, innovations, and the latest trends in healthcare.

Additionally, we take this opportunity to honour the essential contributions of women in public health. From those on the front lines to influential policymakers, their influence on global health is significant. We share inspiring stories that highlight their accomplishments and the challenges they face.

April is also the month of World Health Day—a moment to assess our progress in global health and the journey that lies ahead. This year's theme encourages everyone to take proactive steps towards a healthier future, and we delve into how both individuals and communities can make a difference.

Be sure to check out our Infotainment Section, which now includes an exciting twist: a cash prize for the winner! Put your knowledge to the test and join the fun.

We always appreciate your feedback as it helps us improve. Stay informed and stay healthy!

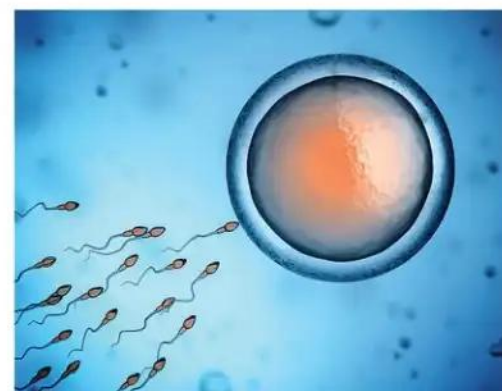
Best wishes,

Dr. Zuhail Abdulla A R  
Editor-in-Chief

## How many (ova) eggs are produced by a woman in her whole life?

*The life of a woman's eggs: From birth to menopause*

Females are born with 1-2 million eggs, but only about 400-500 mature and are released during their lifetime. During each menstrual cycle, typically one ovum is released per month, unless fertilized. This continues from puberty until menopause, when the remaining eggs are depleted, marking the end of a woman's reproductive years. By menopause (45-55 years), egg count declines to nearly zero, ending ovulation and menstruation.



## Menopause - Is it the end of sexual life?

No. Menopause does not mean the end of sexual life. Menopause marks the end of a woman's reproductive years. While hormonal changes can lead to symptoms like vaginal dryness, reduced libido, and mood shifts, many women continue to have a satisfying sex life with proper care and communication. Lifestyle changes, lubricants, hormone therapy (if recommended by a doctor), and emotional well-being play a key role in maintaining intimacy post-menopause.



## Do you believe that consuming small amounts of alcohol is good for health?

*Even a sip can harm: WHO says no alcohol is safe for health*

No level of alcohol consumption is safe for our health, says WHO in The Lancet Public Health. Alcohol is a toxic, psychoactive, and dependence-producing substance and has been classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

## New digital health interventions based on women's health

*Smart healthcare for women: How digital tech is changing lives*

A new WHO/Europe report shows that digital health technologies can improve women's health and promote equity. The benefits are primarily associated with improving access to health care services, enhancing maternal health, providing essential health information, and empowering women to have more autonomy. New digital health interventions for women's health focus on areas like reproductive health, mental health, and chronic disease management, leveraging technologies like mobile apps, telemedicine, and wearables.



## Heart attacks in women: More than just chest pain!

Many women experiencing a heart attack are often misdiagnosed with anxiety, gastritis, or even stress due to their "atypical" symptoms. Unlike men, who typically report severe chest pain radiating down the arm, women may experience symptoms like nausea, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, and back or jaw pain. This leads to delayed diagnosis and treatment, increasing the risk of complications.

According to the American Heart Association (AHA), women are more likely to be dismissed or misdiagnosed when they seek medical care for heart-related symptoms. Raising awareness about these differences is crucial to ensuring timely intervention and saving lives. If you or someone you know experiences unexplained discomfort, don't ignore it—seek medical attention immediately.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### *Women were left out of clinical trials until 1993!*

For decades, medical research mostly studied men, assuming that women's hormonal cycles would "complicate" results. This meant many treatments were developed without considering how they affect women differently. It wasn't until 1993 that the U.S. government mandated the inclusion of women in clinical trials, leading to more accurate and equitable healthcare.

**Why It Matters:**

Women metabolize drugs differently, experience unique symptoms for diseases like heart attacks, and have distinct health risks. Including them in research ensures safer, more effective treatments for everyone.



**Dr. Cemmi Noble**

Leading Infertility Specialist & OBGYN Consultant  
Ananthapuri Hospitals and Research Institute  
cemmimoyal@gmail.com  
+91 9446320313

## Is sex education unnecessary?

### *Empowering the future: Why every child deserves access to sex education*

Did you know that two out of three girls in many countries lack the knowledge they need as they enter puberty and begin menstruating? Early marriage and early and unintended pregnancy are global concerns for girls' health and education.

Imagine a world where all children are able to complete their education in good health without having to drop out due to early, child or forced marriage or union, or early and unintended pregnancy. Only by providing quality comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) can make this world a reality, helping learners gain essential knowledge and skills to be healthy, empowered and foster positive and gender equitable relationships.

## "Snip the myths, Not your manhood!" – The easier birth control choice

Vasectomy is a quick, safe, and nearly painless birth control option that takes just 15 minutes with minimal recovery. Unlike female sterilization, which requires major surgery and longer healing, vasectomy is simpler and safer. It doesn't affect hormones, sex drive, or pleasure, and is 99.85% effective. By choosing vasectomy, men can share the responsibility of birth control, making family planning easier and safer for women.



## Period Panties ? What is it?

*Period panties (Reusable menstrual underwear): A comfy, leak-proof & eco-friendly alternative to pads!*

Period panties are designed with absorbent layers and leak proof features to provide protection during menstruation offering an eco-friendly and potentially cost-effective alternative to disposable pads and tampons. Some menstrual panties can also be used for other purposes such as catching discharge if you have urinary incontinence or postpartum bleeding.

## An interview on women's reproductive health

### 1. In what ways can women take charge of their reproductive health?

Education plays a vital role. There are numerous misconceptions surrounding topics like menstruation. A typical menstrual cycle lasts between 5 to 7 days, with women using about 3 to 4 pads daily. Pain is usually felt on the first day, but if discomfort begins days earlier or continues beyond the period, it is considered abnormal and should be addressed by a healthcare professional. Additionally, any unusual bleeding—such as heavy flow, bleeding after menopause, or irregular cycles—requires evaluation. Despite being aware of sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies, many individuals overlook contraception due to misinformation. It is essential for both partners to take shared responsibility for reproductive health.

### 2. How can women effectively manage menstrual health in areas with limited resources?

Menstrual cups present a cost-effective and sustainable solution. Unlike disposable pads, which are used once, menstrual cups can last for years and significantly reduce waste. While some institutions offer pad vending machines, investing in a menstrual cup provides long-term advantages.

### 3. What barriers do women face in accessing reproductive healthcare?

A significant challenge is the spread of misinformation regarding contraception. For instance, some individuals mistakenly believe that oral contraceptives should only be taken when partners are present, whereas they need to be taken consistently. Many people only seek medical advice when issues arise, rather than taking a proactive approach. Preconception care is often underutilized, despite its importance in promoting healthier pregnancies.

### 4. Are menstrual cups a safe option?

Absolutely, they are both hygienic and safe. However, some women may feel apprehensive due to difficulties with insertion. Unlike pads, which can create a moist environment that fosters infections, menstrual cups help maintain genital health by keeping the area dry.

### 5. How can women focus on their mental health in the face of societal expectations?

A reallocation of household responsibilities is essential. Women often balance multiple roles while men may relax after work. Encouraging family participation in household chores can help achieve a better work-life balance. Women should prioritize self-care, avoid overexertion, and strive to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

### 6. What are the current trends in infertility cases?

Approximately 40-50% of infertility cases are attributed to female factors, 20% to male factors, and 20-30% to a combination of both. It is crucial to consider both partners when addressing infertility treatment.

### 7. How can we enhance women's health and well-being?

Younger women typically emphasize fitness and nutrition, whereas older women frequently overlook self-care. Many women prioritize the needs of others, which can result in unhealthy eating habits. It is important to encourage women to consult healthcare professionals instead of depending on informal sources for medical advice.



**Editor-in-Chief :** Dr. Zuhail Abdulla A R

**Associate Editors :** Dr. Veena Mohan P R and Dr. Kehren R Rayma

**Photography , Layout and Design :** Dr. Sooraj Subash

**Committee members :** Dr. Jwala S Parameswar, Dr. Vasudha V Nambiar, Dr. Karthika K, Dr. Aiswarya A S, Dr. Aparna Suresh, Dr. Theerdha T, Dr. Ahaliya U K, Dr. Anjana Devi A D, Dr. Sinni P S, Dr. Saranya M M, Anupa Y, Dr. Meera Murali, Dr. Akhil Chandran C, Dr. Vinay Mohan K, Dr. Lekshmy P S, Dr. Suhrida Balan, Dr. Asha K S, Dr. Reshma George, Dr. Arathi B G, Dr. Ajas P S, Dr. Renjini R Nath

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References

## Stalwarts of Public Health



Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) was a pioneering figure in public health and modern nursing. Born into a wealthy British family, she defied societal norms to dedicate her life to healthcare. Her nightly rounds caring for wounded soldiers during the Crimean War (1853–1856) earned her the title "Lady with the Lamp."

Nightingale was a front-runner in using statistical analysis to demonstrate the link between hygiene and health. She collected data on mortality rates, proving that preventable diseases via sanitation & hospital conditions caused more deaths than battlefield injuries. This evidence-based approach led to significant reforms in military and civilian hospitals worldwide.

In 1860, she established the Nightingale Training School for Nurses and wrote the book "Notes on Nursing" thereby professionalizing nursing and shaping modern healthcare. Beyond nursing, she worked with the British government to improve sanitation in India, reducing cholera and malaria deaths. She also influenced hospital planning, advocating for proper ventilation, clean water and hygienic conditions.

As a woman in a male-dominated field, Nightingale used statistical evidence to push for systemic healthcare improvements, leaving a lasting impact on public health policies. Her groundbreaking contributions remain a cornerstone of nursing and public health, making her one of history's most influential healthcare figures.

## INFOTAINMENT

### Quiz

1. She was best known for her research into the health effects of industrial work on women and for her discovery of the carcinogenic properties of chromium.
2. She is known for defining the field of injury prevention as a public health discipline, and was the founding director of the School's Center for Injury Research and Policy.
3. A Scottish physician and epidemiologist who conducted an experiment to prove that citrus fruits cured the disease Scurvy. Name the physician?
4. Identify the Logo - It is a global research non-profit organization established in 1982 and It seeks to promote a sustainable human society with a basis of human health and well - being, environmental sustainability, and economic opportunity.
5. She was the pivotal figure in the race to develop a polio vaccine and Her team became the first to successfully create a killed-virus vaccine that was effective in animal models.



**An unfinished fight since the 20th century around the world. Can you identify the disease?**



**Mr TB, the unwanted guest is still lingering. If TB could talk..... What would it say?**



## Healthcare systems around the world



Dr. Zuhail Abdulla A R  
MPH 7th Batch



### What distinguishes the Australian healthcare system from many countries in Asia?

The healthcare system in Australia offers universal coverage via Medicare, established in 1984, to ensure free or subsidized treatment. In comparison, numerous Asian countries operate mixed healthcare systems that combine public and private care, frequently necessitating out-of-pocket expenses. Additionally, Australia places a strong emphasis on primary care and maintains rigorous regulatory standards.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) facilitates the affordability of medications. Public hospitals, government-sponsored health initiatives, and preventive care are essential components of the nation's public health strategy.

#### Key Highlights & Advantages

**Universal Access:** All citizens and permanent residents are entitled to free or subsidized healthcare services.

**Robust Public Health Programs:** Well-established initiatives in immunization, disease prevention, and mental health care are in place.

**Government Investment:** Enhanced accessibility is achieved through funding for public hospitals, community health centres and programs aimed at Indigenous health.

#### Challenges & Disadvantages

**Extended Wait Times:** The high demand for services in public hospitals often results in delays for elective procedures.

**Rural Health Disparities:** Healthcare access is significantly limited in remote regions.

**Chronic Disease Challenges:** Increasing prevalence of obesity, diabetes, and mental health disorders places considerable strain on healthcare resources.

#### Future Prospects

Australia is advancing its telehealth services, digital health records, mental health support, and aged care initiatives. Public health policies are increasingly focused on preventive measures, health equity, and addressing chronic disease challenges. Ongoing investment and innovation are expected to fortify Australia's healthcare system, ensuring its sustainability in the long run.

## CROSSWORD- Women in Public Health

**Note: Consider the first and last name for answer**

#### Across

1. The founder of Family planning association of India, playing a crucial role in promoting reproductive healthcare and birth control awareness in the country
4. A doctor who helped improve how cervical screening samples are tested and was involved in developing the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine.
7. A birth control activist and sex educator who founded Planned Parenthood, opened the first U.S. birth control clinic, and helped develop the contraceptive pill.
8. An American oncologist and biotech leader, the first woman CEO of a major global health philanthropic organization based in Seattle.

#### Down

2. A toxicologist and occupational health pioneer known as the founder of occupational medicine in the U.S., who fought for workplace safety.
3. A pioneering African American physician and public health researcher who advanced health equity in Black communities and studied racial health disparities.
5. Former New Zealand Prime Minister and UNDP Administrator, recognized for her work in sustainable development, gender equality, and global cooperation.
6. A public health leader in early 20th-century New York, known for reducing infant mortality, improving maternal health in immigrant communities, and identifying 'Typhoid Mary'.



Find answers to all the questions and mail to..

[public.health.wire@gmail.com](mailto:public.health.wire@gmail.com)

**To win a cash prize of INR 1000/-  
Last date to apply : 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025**