

“90 PERCENT OF CANCER-CAUSING FACTORS ARE ENVIRONMENTAL”

Public Health Specialist Dr. Nurten Elkin stated that cancer is the second cause of death in the World as well as in Turkey and said: “Today, 30-50 percent of cancer can be prevented, but this situation is possible by avoiding risk factors and early diagnosis. 90 percent of cancer-causing factors are environmental and 10 percent is genetic.”

“10 PERCENT IS GENETIC”

Emphasizing that cancer is the second cause of death after cardiovascular diseases among the deaths whose cause is known in the World and in the Turkey, Asst. Prof. Dr. Nurten Elkin from Istanbul Gelisim University Faculty of Health Sciences said: “The leading factors causing cancer are environmental factors at the rate of 90% and genetic factors at the rate of 10%. When we look at environmental factors, alcohol, tobacco use, infections, unhealthy diet and obesity are preventable causes.”

Reminding that cancer is a common name given to many diseases due to its common features, Dr. Elkin listed the symptoms of cancer as follows:

“Handling of a painless, growing mass in the breast, palpable swelling under the skin in areas such as armpits, neck, groin, weight loss or gain for no known reason, loss of appetite and fatigue, non-healing wounds, long-term hoarseness or cough, the formation of a new nevus in the body or changes in the existing moles, changes in bowel habits such as diarrhea and constipation, difficult or painful urination, indigestion after eating, difficulty in swallowing, abdominal pain, unexplained night sweats, bloody urine, irregular menstrual bleeding, bleeding from the nose and gums, blood in the stool, bleeding under the skin and easy bruises.”

“MANY CANCERS HIGHLY POSSIBLE TO HEAL”

Stating that the cause of the symptoms may not be due to cancer most of the time, the health institution should be consulted if the symptoms last longer than a few weeks, Dr. Nurten Elkin said: "Many cancers are likely to cure if diagnosed early and treated appropriately. It is important for the community to know that at least one third of deaths from cancer can be prevented by not using tobacco products, ensuring adequate and balanced nutrition, increasing physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight and avoiding alcohol. In addition, prevention of air pollution, avoiding exposure to sunlight especially between 10:00 and 16:00 and taking protective measures, protection from infectious agents such as cancer-causing HPV and Hepatitis B, and occupational and environmental exposure to carcinogens are also important in protection from cancer."

"SOCIETY'S KNOWLEDGE SHOULD BE INCREASED"

Drawing attention to the need to increase the knowledge of the society with early diagnosis programs in cancer, Dr. Elkin said: "Early admission to the health institution when individuals encounter symptoms will create very positive results in diagnosis and treatment. Screening programs are carried out for breast, colon and cervical cancers in our country. Community based cancer screening programs are carried out in Cancer Early Diagnosis Screening and Training Centers (KETEM), Community Health Centers (TSM), Healthy Life Centers (SHM) and Family Health Centers (ASM). In our country, screening services are provided free of charge against breast, colon (colorectal) and cervical cancers."

"TURKEY IS THE SOLE AUTHORITY OF THE STRAITS"

Following the declaration issued by 104 retired admirals, President Erdoğan said, "We consider the gains Montreux has provided to our country as important, and we continue our commitment to this contract until we find the opportunity for the better." Political Scientist Asst. Prof. Dr. Firat Demirkol, who evaluated the issue, said: "Turning the political chaos and

fear in the period leading to World War II in its favor Turkey remains sole authority of the straits.”

Providing information about the historical process extending to the Montreux Convention, Political Scientist Asst. Prof. Dr. Firat Demirkol from Istanbul Gelisim University said: “ When viewed in historical chronology The Montreux Straits Convention which ensures complete independence of the straits and Turkish domination over them, was achieved after a long period of military and diplomatic struggles.”

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“THEY WERE CONVINCED TO SIGN”

Stating that the weaknesses of the United Kingdom and the USA were utilized by successful diplomacy, Demirkol, added: “ In the process leading up to the World War II Seizing the opportunity of this weakness of the US and UK which were worried about the aggressive attitude of Italy and Germany, especially the emergence of fascist regimes Turkey has again raised the issue of the Straits and persuaded the Western States to sign the Montreux Straits Convention in 1936 as a result of the successful diplomatic process.”

“IMPARTIALITY WAS THE RESULT OF MONTREUX”

Reminding that neutrality was achieved with Montreux during the World War II, Demirkol said: “ As one of the most important pillars of this situation, daunting the Straits by Turkey with the Montreux Convention had a great influence. In particular, the right to close the Straits to warships and Turkey's sole dominant position prevented the countries in the region from encountering more destructive consequences of the war.

REPORT ON HEALTH LITERACY PUBLISHED: IT INCREASES HEALTH COSTS AND CHRONIC DISEASES

With "Turkey's Health Literacy Levels and Related Factors Survey" which was conducted over 6 thousand 228 households by Directorate General for Health Improvement (DGHI), health literacy levels were determined at the national level. According to the survey, approximately 7 out of 10 people in Turkey were found to have limited or inadequate levels of health literacy. Dr. Yüksel Barut said: "When we look at the study, we see that 4 processes are being examined. As a result, scary numbers emerge. We see that 68 percent of the society does not have health literacy. When a country has low health literacy, health spending and individuals' chronic illnesses is apt to increase."

Based on the conceptual frame reference of European Health Literacy, Turkey Health Literacy Scale-32 (Tsoy-32) has been developed through a group of studies that were carried out by Directorate General of Health Improvement (DGHI) in order to measure health literacy level. Within the scope of "Turkey's Health Literacy Levels and Related Factors Survey", which has been conducted over 6 thousand 228 households, health literacy levels were determined at the national level. In the survey, how the level of health literacy varies according to demographic characteristics, socioeconomic conditions and communication tools that are stated has been examined to be used as a source of information on healthrelated issues. According to the examination, it was seen that 30.9 percent of the respondents were inadequate, 38 percent were problematic-limited, 23.4 percent were adequate, and 7.7 percent were excellent considering the level of health literacy determined by TSOY-32.

Evaluating the subject, Istanbul Gelisim University Faculty of Health Sciences Vice Dean, Dr. Yüksel Barut and Instructor Bahar Kanbur made suggestions by stating that health literacy should be taught in primary education.

38 PERCENT OF THE SOCIETY HAS NO HEALTH LITERACY

Giving information about the study conducted by DGHI, Dr. Barut said: "There is a study carried out by the General Directorate of Health Improvement. A survey was conducted with individuals from all levels over 6 thousand 228 households. The study is based on two fundamental dimensions. First, treatment and service; the second is on the protection and promotion of health. When we look at it as a process, we see that 4 processes are being examined. We can respectively name them as; accessing information, understanding information, questioning and evaluating information, and finally applying information. These four processes are complementary to each other. In this survey, individuals are asked questions about information and examined in 4 groups as "inadequate", "problematic ones", "medium and near perfect ones" and "excellent ones". As a result, scary numbers emerge. When we look at the inadequate category, it approaches 31 percent, and when we look at the problematic ones, it is almost 38 percent. Adding these percentages, we see that 68 percent of the society does not have health literacy. The rate of those who are perfect is around 7 percent."

INCREASES COST AND RISK OF CHRONIC DISEASE

Noting that healthcare costs increase if the level of health literacy is low, Dr. Barut said: "These rates bring the increase in our healthcare costs. When a country has low health literacy, its spending on health is apt to increase. We are moving away from preventive medicine. However, if the individual had access to information and used it to improve health, the costs would decrease. By doing so preventive medicine and public health will be preserved. The Ministry of Health will evaluate what needs to be done through this questionnaire, but when we look at the basics, it is necessary to provide the first education for how to reach, understand, evaluate and improve the health information of the

individuals. "When the education of these concepts is given to the individual, the health expenses of the country will decrease."

Dr. Yüksel Barut continued his words as follows:

"This situation is also related to the general literacy rate. The individuals unquestioningly trust in doctors. Therefore, the patient complies with what doctors say by 70 percent. There are also those who try the solutions their friends or family members suggest. Their rate of doing so is 70-73 percent. When we come to chronic patients, we see the inadequacy of individuals. We also encounter inadequacies about what an individual should do to avoid chronic diseases, and what would happen if he had done it. In the group of primary school graduates in the survey, the low level of health literacy approaches 60 percent, which is a huge number. There are many factors here. The first is about the individual's education, the second is about the individual's environment, and the third is about the individual's access to the health system. But above all, there is an obligation to adopt the concept of health literacy to the individual while providing education. In Turkey, health is always postponed and people visit the doctor when push comes to shove. However, when you see the doctor in the last minute, costs will increase."

HEALTH LITERACY SHOULD BE PROMOTED IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Stating that according to the general data of the health literacy survey, in terms of "Treatment and Service Process" the rate of inadequacy is 27 percent and 31 percent for the problematic individuals. Dr. Barut said: "Again the number is 58 percent. The adequate level is below 30 percent, the perfect one below 11 percent. We said that the insufficiency of primary and high school graduates was 27 percent. The insufficiency of health literacy of university graduates is 9.6 percent. The inadequacy here is that he is not able to access information, does not understand and evaluate the information he has obtained and does not take any practice that will improve his health. Actually, I want to emphasize that; This

situation is not merely related to the school or department the person attends. Health literacy must also be developed as a culture. This education and culture should first be given by the family and then given in primary education”.

MEN'S LITERACY RATE IS HIGHER THAN WOMEN

Stating that the level of health literacy is low, especially in the elderly, Dr. Yüksel Barut also drew attention to the ratio of women and men. He listed the reasons for this inadequacy as follows:

“Of course, over 65 years old is always on the agenda. This group may also have difficulties in accessing information, as they are a bit distanced from technology. Then, the rate of insufficiency in health literacy among the elderly rises to 90 percent. Another sad fact is that 35 percent of women and 26 percent of men have health literacy inadequacy. At this point, our women, who are the heaviest workers, postpone their health because they generally deal with housework, their own jobs and children. Sometimes the procrastination happens when they prioritise their husband’s or children’s health issues. Therefore, the high level of health literacy in women is not due to illiteracy, but from environmental factors. ”

IRELAND AND THE NETHERLANDS ARE IN THE BEST POSITION

Talking about the study conducted in Europe, Dr. Barut said: "The European Health Protection Health Literacy Consortium has data from the survey in 8 countries previously conducted. When we compare them, we see that the best places in literacy are owned by Ireland and the Netherlands. Health literacy climbed up to 60 percent in Ireland and up to 72 percent in the Netherlands. But the underlying problem for countries like us is low health literacy.”

IT AFFECTS THE ENTIRE SOCIETY

Emphasizing the need to raise awareness of the society about health literacy, Faculty of Health Sciences lecturer Bahar Kanbur made various suggestions. Kanbur said: “In fact, low health literacy is one of the issues affecting the whole society. Therefore, healthcare professionals and individuals need to increase these abilities and capacities. Of course, this is a multidimensional and multi-sectoral study. Therefore, many stakeholders are required. At this point, individuals need to be able to read their individual health information, interpret their own health charts, use basic devices such as thermometers and blood pressure measurement devices that the individual and his family need, and adjust the doses and timing of their own medicines. For example, it is very important that babies are breastfed in the first 6 months of life. However, we see that it is rarely applied in women with low health literacy in the society. Therefore, these women and their families need to be made aware of by healthcare professionals.”

THE PATIENT SHOULD KNOW THE COMPLAINT MECHANISM

Underlining the need to organize education programs that will increase health literacy in accordance with age, Kanbur said: “It may be good to raise awareness of the elderly on health literacy, to prepare patient-friendly written materials, and to organize awarenessraising campaigns. In fact, there are some campaigns run by the Directorate General for Health Promotion. The rational use of antibiotics, the fight against obesity, and the campaign against addiction can be given as examples. It is important for the patient to know the complaint mechanism. It may be helpful to actively or passively direct them to benefit from these health services. In the meantime, we observe that mobile health applications are also very useful. Because when a person enters all his information here, he can actually make his own health management more clearly.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF MASS COMMUNICATION TOOLS IS GREAT

Stating that the mass media has a great importance regarding health literacy, Kanbur said: "It is seen that half of the society has difficulty in how to evaluate the information obtained from it. So they cannot decide whether the information is correct or not. When we look at the rates here, we see that 48.6 percent of the internet is used. We see that 33 percent of television, 8.9 percent of the newspaper, and 6.5 percent of mobile phone and smart applications are used. This table also shows that the articles and journals should be used more and the importance should be emphasized."

"WASH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES WITH CARBONATED WATER"

The "pesticides", which are applied to help vegetables and fruits grow without damage, can have negative effects on both farmers and public health if used incorrectly and unconsciously. Food engineer Dr. Lecturer Member Negin Azarabadi said, "Washing fruits and vegetables with carbonated water is one of the most effective methods of pesticide removal."

"EVEN ORGANIC PRODUCTS CAN HAVE PESTICIDES"

"Pesticide" is a mixture of substances used to help vegetables and fruits grow by protecting them from harms in nature. Stating that pesticides can be seen in organic products from time to time, Lecturer Member Dr. Negin Azarabadi indicates: "In scientific studies, some pesticide residues are found even on organic products. Pesticides, according to the definition of EPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency); chemical compounds

commonly used in agricultural applications to control pests and disease carriers such as weeds, insects, mosquitoes, ticks, rats, mice. However, according to scientific studies, it has been confirmed that pesticides can also cause health problems such as birth defects, nerve damage and cancer. Therefore, it is important to wash fruits and vegetables effectively before consuming.”

"SALT WATER SOLUTION IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN PLAIN WATER"

Stating that the disinfectants used in washing the products are not as effective as water, Dr. Azarabadi continued:

“A study conducted in 2007 investigated the residues of 4 common pesticides by washing vegetables with vinegar, saline solution and plain water for 20 minutes. According to the data obtained, it is determined that a 10% saline solution is more effective than plain water. Apples washed with a baking soda-water (carbonated water) solution for 12-15 minutes do not have any pesticide residues left on the surface or under the apple peel. Due to the negative effects of pesticides on health, it is very important to wash fruits and vegetables effectively. Based on the data of scientific studies, washing fruits and vegetables with carbonated water is one of the most effective methods of pesticide removal.”