

Beyond the ether

By Samaneh Nazerian

Oh, God! Who is he?
A real treasure, Ali!

A true love song,
Who was strong!

The apple of our eyes,
Answer to all whys!

For the thirst sufferer, water,
All the orphans' father!

For the grief autumn,
The most precious gem!

Noah and Abraham,
The first Shia Imam!

The water of the springs,
The pearl of cameo rings,
A role model for all ages,
The book of knowledge, a whiz!

God's hands and heart,
The sun and the light!
In color pure white,
Absolutely right!

Victor of the world,
Near to the Lord!

Injustice remover,
Corruption fighter,
The world's mover,
And the time setter!

The spring of seasons,
Delighting the senses!

Mirror of purity,
Majesty of humanity,
A man of all dignity,
And of great integrity,
Manifestation of the mighty,
And source of generosity!

Sweet nectar of the fruits,
His name in lovers' words!

And in every river,
Is the flow of water!

He is as well the ether,
The best of all together,
And in stormy weather,
The safe haven navigator!

The most perfect one,
In religion, well-done!

The fount of justice,
The peak of fairness!

The soul of life,
Best to his wife!

Collection of varieties,
Free of all ambiguities,
Combination of the beauties,
Brightest star of the galaxies!

He is the rainfall,
Who is never dull!

The supporter of all goodness,
The right way and the bridges!

Wow! Who is he?
Under God's lee,
Hey, let me see,
Nay, he is Ali!

Husband and wife share exact name, date of birth

BEIJING — A husband and wife are getting some attention in Danjiangkou, Hubei Province, due to their names.

Both are named Wang Yang, the same two Chinese characters, and both were born on April 29, 1982.

The couple began to date in 2007 when they worked together at the same company.

(Source: China Daily/Agencies)

People who have a particular gene flaw and live alone in middle-age are at highest risk of developing dementia, researchers suggest.

The risk affects those who split up or were widowed from their long-term partner before the age of 50, Sweden's Karolinska Institute found.

Researchers say the APOE variant 4 is the most important genetic risk factor for Alzheimer's.

However, UK experts said there are many ways of reducing dementia risk.

As the world's population ages, dementia is a growing concern.

In 2005 around 25m people had dementia, but the number is expected to be around 81m by 2040.

The researchers studied 2,000 men and women from eastern Finland aged around 50 and again 21 years later.

They looked at their marital status and also carried out genetic tests to see if they carried the gene APOE variant 4.

People living alone in middle-age had twice the risk of dementia than those who were living with a partner.

But widows and widowers had three times the risk of dementia.

And those with the APOE gene variant who had lost their partners and remained living alone had the highest risk of all of developing Alzheimer's.

The team, led by Dr. Krister Hakansson, said the results were important for preventing dementia and cognitive impairment.

They also said "supportive inter-

Solo life ups gene dementia risk



vention" could be helpful for people who had lost a partner.

Writing in the British Medical Journal online, they said: "Living in a relationship with a partner might imply cognitive and social challenges that have a protective effect against cognitive impairment in later life."

They said the link with the APOE gene variant had to be replicated in other studies, but that it was in line with previous research findings.

In an editorial, also published online by the BMJ, Dr. Catherine Helmer of the Universite Victor Seglen in Bordeaux, said: "One possibility is

that the age and conditions of widowhood are crucial factors.

"Being widowed late in life, as were most of the people in previous studies, is perhaps less stressful - especially as the person is widowed for a shorter duration - and might thus not be a risk factor.

"Nevertheless, the hypothesis of a deleterious biological effect of widowhood remains to be proved, as does the possibility of genetic vulnerability as a link between widowhood and dementia."

But she said the link with the APOE variant should be treated "with caution", because this was an epidemiological study which looked at disease incidence in a population, and needed to be confirmed in further studies.

Dr. Susanne Sorensen, head of research for the UK's Alzheimer's Society, said: "Inheriting the APOE gene is only one of many factors that can affect your overall risk of developing Alzheimer's."

She added: "Evidence suggests that remaining socially active may reduce your risk of dementia and living with someone is certainly a good way of doing this.

"However, single people shouldn't worry - there are many other ways to reduce your risk of dementia.

"The best evidence is around eating a Mediterranean diet, exercising regularly, and getting your cholesterol and blood pressure checked regularly."

Rebecca Wood, chief executive of the Alzheimer's Research Trust, said: "In societies where divorce and separation are growing trends, we need to examine how we help people adjust to living alone.

"Those who are widowed are at a much higher risk, and interventions soon after their loss may have a significant preventive effect."

(Source: BBC)

Iranian annual death rate from smoking to reach 200,000 by 2019

Tehran Times Social Desk

TEHRAN — "About 200 thousand people will die each year in Iran as a result of smoking cigarettes within the next ten years," Health Ministry official Mostafa Qaffari warned here on Wednesday.

Smoking is a global health problem and the second largest cause of deaths throughout the world, Qaffari said, adding "Tobacco is currently responsible for 5 million deaths per year in the world," more than 10 thousand per day.

According to the World Health Organization, one in ten deaths among adults worldwide is caused by tobacco. And tobacco caused 100 million deaths in the 20th century, Qaffari explained.

"If current trends continue, the death toll from tobacco is expected to reach ten million annually within the next twenty years" and could hit one billion deaths in the 21st century, he notified.

"Based on scientific researches, cigarette smoking causes



heart and vascular diseases, respiratory illnesses, and even nervous and mental disorders," Qaffari added.

It increases the risk of cancer in humans, Qaffari said, blaming cigarette smoking for 30% of cancer deaths in Iran.

He also described tobacco as the underlying cause of 75% of respiratory diseases among the Iranians.

The official referred to the Health Ministry's figures and said, "More than 10 million of the country's 70 million population smoke regularly and Iranians light up over 58 billion cigarettes yearly."

There has been a 3% fall in number of Iranian youth in danger of becoming smoker over the past four years, Qaffari stated, averring that in 1382 (March 2003-March 2004), about 12% of the country's youngsters were in danger of becoming smoker, "the rate decreased to 9% in 1386 (March 2007 - March 2008."

Study: Early therapy can save teens from depression

Depression is one of the dark demons of adolescence. Up to 1 in 12 American teenagers is affected, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and three times as many will experience depression at some point by age 18.

Studies show that at least 20% of teenagers with clinical depression will go on to develop chronic cases that will haunt them throughout adulthood. That is, if they reach adulthood. Suicide is a significant risk for depressed adolescents and the third leading cause of deaths among U.S. teenagers.

It's no wonder, then, that researchers are beginning to focus on preventing teenage depression in the first place.

A new study in the current issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) is the largest to date showing that a relatively modest intervention goes a long way to prevent episodes of depression in high-risk teens. The authors hope it will provide a model that could be used widely in schools to protect kids from depression.

The study involved 316 adolescents, ages 13 to 17, in four cities. All of the teenagers had a history of depression or current symptoms that just fell short of a clinical diagnosis. The teens also had at least one parent who had been diagnosed with depression.

Half the teenagers were randomly assigned to a prevention program that consisted of eight weekly group sessions of cognitive behavioral instruction (CB) lasting 90 minutes each, plus six follow-up sessions that met once a month.

The other half of the volunteers were assigned to a control group that got "usual care," meaning they were free to seek help from whatever resources were available to them in their community - as were the teens in the experimental group. There were no differences between the groups in terms of the types of services they chose on their own.

The teenagers were followed for nine months. Less than a quarter (21.4%) of those in the CB program went on to have an episode of depression, compared with about a third (32.7%) of those in the control group.

The results were far more dramatic for teens whose parents were not actively suffering from depression: only 11.7% who went through the program had an episode of depression during the nine-month follow-up.

The CB sessions focused on teaching the kids to think more realistically - and less catastrophically - about their problems

and experiences.

"It's what we call the ABCD model," explains lead author Judy Garber, professor of psychology and human development at Vanderbilt University.

Working in small groups of three to 10 works well for adolescents, says psychologist Gregory Clarke, who pioneered the program and is a co-author of the study.

The authors hope the program will become a model for interventions that could be implemented at a reasonable cost in schools or pediatric clinics. They note that school psychologists or social workers with a master's level of education could be trained to lead the groups.

The researchers hope to publish a cost-benefit analysis of the program sometime next year. Part of the equation, however, will be to show that the benefits are lasting. The team has just received NIMH funding to follow the adolescents in the current study through their early to mid-20s.

"We hope that the program will not only prevent depression, but also the impairments associated with it," says Garber. "We will be looking at alcohol and drug use, eating problems, anxiety and behavior problems and performance in school."

The researchers will also examine what can be done for the adolescents whose parents are in the grips of depression: this subset, which was 45% of the participants, did not benefit significantly from the cognitive behavioral program.

"It's awfully hard to change your thinking habits if a parent is depressed and everything is so chaotic around you," observes Clarke. Future studies, says Garber, will look at whether treating the parent for depression makes a difference.

Because it focuses on prevention, the JAMA study "really moves the field forward," says child psychologist Anne Marie Albano, who directs the Clinic for Anxiety and Related Disorders at Columbia University Medical Center.

Albano says that recent surveys showing rising rates of mental illness in college students have sounded the alarm about the need to intervene earlier to prevent the cascade of social, academic, economic and emotional woes that befall teens who slip into depression.

"This study is telling us that if you get kids early in the cycle of depression when they have symptoms and are on the path, you can give them skills that manage those symptoms."

(Source: Time.com)



15 percent of U.S. teens think they'll die young

Challenging the notion that risky behavior reflects a youthful sense of immortality, a new study has found almost 15 percent of American teens believe they will die before age 35 -- a perspective strongly linked to risky behavior.

"Prior research has shown that typically teenagers are no worse than adults in terms of viewing their own vulnerability, and, thankfully, most adolescents in this country do not believe that their risk of early death is high," noted study author Dr. Iris Wagman Borowsky, an associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota. "But we found that more than one in seven youths do have a pessimistic view about their future mortality and are more likely to take risks."

"So as a pediatrician, this says to me that I need to assess my young patients' ability to see themselves in the future," Borowsky added. "And, when I see a problem, to try to figure out how to instill optimism and hope, knowing that a pessimistic view may be an indicator of future risky behavior."

The findings, published in the July issue of Pediatrics, are based on a three-year tracking of attitudes and behaviors among 20,594 teens who were in 7th through 12th grade at the start of the study.

The teens were interviewed periodically to gauge their views on personal mortality and to tally the degree to which they engaged in such behaviors as attempting suicide, using illegal drugs, sustaining fight-related injuries that required medical care and being arrested by the police.

The interviews revealed that nearly 15 percent of the teens believed they had just a 50-50 chance of living to age 35.

Race and wealth appeared to affect the risk for that belief. About 10 percent of white teens bore this pessimistic view, compared with 15 percent of Asian youth, 21 percent of Hispanic teens, 26 percent of African American teens and 29 percent of Native American teens.

The study also found that a teen's mental state and behavior were mutually influential. A teen who predicted a short lifespan, for instance, during an early interview was more likely to engage in subsequent risky behavior, and teens who engaged in risky behavior throughout the first year of the study were more likely to develop a pessimistic view of their future.

Borowsky suggested that efforts to prevent such a cycle of skewed perceptions and risky behavior among teens should focus on factors critical to instilling youthful optimism.

"We know that schools matter, and homes and parents matter," she said. "The concept of parents and family connectedness is so important with youth: having fun with your family and having parents you can communicate with and who tell you they love you. And having schools that create a climate where students feel connected and safe is very important. Positive media messages also play a role. These are all things that might prevent the development of a pessimistic view among youth."

(Source: HealthDay News)