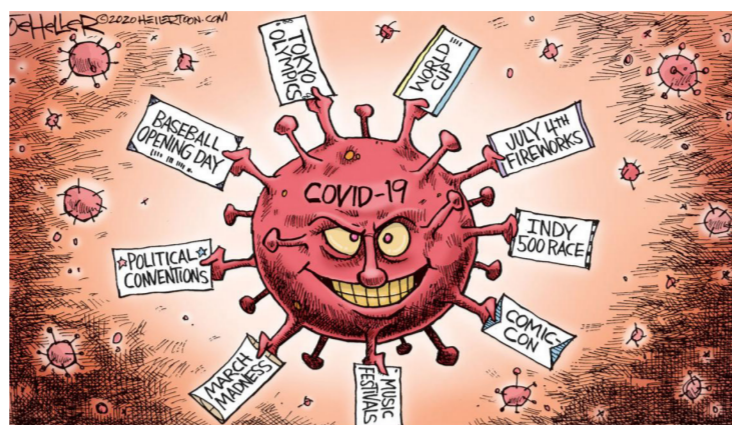


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NO HOLDS BARRED



There is an urgent need to crack a whip on those who dispose of drugs whether in manifest or secret to the mentally disturbed victims. At the same time, instead of penalising the drug takers, they should be given counselling sessions to sort out issues that prompt them to take these drugs in the first place. Furthermore, parents must keep a vigil on their children: from where they are coming, who are they friends with, why are they coming late, what has been done to the pocket-money they get. These are the questions which every parent must pose to their children. Talking freely with your children is one thing which will certainly reduce any strain eating up their fragile minds.

Six years ago, the Ebola virus ravaged West Africa. While Ebola is deadly and highly contagious, the economic and human costs could have been far lower if the international community had provided the needed support without delay. In the face of a new, fast-spreading virus, COVID-19, governments and international institutions are at risk of making the same mistake.

The Ebola virus arrived in Nigeria in July 2014, when an infected Liberian man flew into Lagos, where I was working as a doctor. When he came to our hospital for treatment, we were grossly unprepared. Indeed, I became infected, as did several of my colleagues.

But at least it was a private hospital with reasonable resources, including running water and medical gloves. Moreover, when we suspected we had an Ebola case, our medical director knew immediately to contact officials at the state health ministry and the World Health Organization. The state and federal health ministries mobilized resources immediately.

Ultimately, it took 93 days to contain the virus in Nigeria. Eight lives were lost, including those of some of my closest colleagues. I was lucky to survive. But the outbreak was much more devastating in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. With weak and under-resourced health systems, these countries desperately needed international support to enable them to contain the outbreak. Yet when that support arrived, it was generally too little and too late.

Between April and October 2014, the United Nations mobilized \$15 million through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) for efforts to fight Ebola. But by August 2014, the estimated cost of containing the outbreak stood at over \$71 million. The next month - when 700 new cases emerged in just one week - it was \$1 billion.

Lacking adequate funding, hospitals did not have enough beds or isolation treatment units for all the victims. With few options, relatives of Ebola victims defied government orders and dumped still-contagious infected bodies in the streets.

Finally, in September 2014, the UN created its Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) to scale up efforts on the ground and establish "unity of purpose" among responders. By December, donor countries and organizations had pledged \$2.89 billion.

But even those lofty pledges didn't work out quite as planned: as of February 2015, just over \$1 billion had been disbursed.

That gap was not surprising. According to Oxfam, donors deliver only 47%, on average, of what they pledge for recovery efforts, and even that might overstate the amount that arrives in recipient countries. This reflects an utter lack of accountability.

Viruses Move Faster Than Governments

ADAORA OKOLI



When pledges are abandoned, the UN agencies that handled the fundraising do not inform the public.

The result is a vicious circle, in which funding delays allow the outbreak to worsen, thereby increasing the total cost. By the time Ebola was contained, three years had passed, and countries had spent almost five times the amount that was estimated in September 2014. Nearly 12,000 people died.

History seems to be repeating with the COVID-19 outbreak, but on an even larger scale. The countries to which the virus has already spread contain more than half the global population. Once it reaches Afri-

can countries with weak health systems - especially their densely populated cities - the number of new infections could soar.

Recognizing this risk, World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus has requested \$675 million to prepare weak health systems to cope with COVID-19 between now and April. Yet, as of the end of February, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was the only organization that had responded to the call, offering a \$100 million donation.

The Ebola outbreak of 2014-16 underscored two truths of global crisis response: fundraising during

emergencies seldom works, and CERF, which covers everything from hurricanes to droughts, is inadequate to pick up the slack. That is why a separate emergency-relief fund focused on disease outbreaks should be created. This isn't a matter of charity, but of self-preservation. Viruses do not respect national borders. I thought I was safe from Ebola in Nigeria, and then I contracted it. When northern Italians heard about the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, most probably never expected to end up on lockdown. While a country like Singapore might be able to mount a powerful and effective response to COVID-19 infections, many others cannot. And when a virus

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spreads to communities without the ability to contain it, even those with the capacity can quickly become overwhelmed. Simply put, no one is safe until everyone is. Viruses move faster than governments or international fundraisers. Our best chance at minimizing the risks from outbreaks is thus to ensure that an adequate emergency-relief fund is ready and waiting to be deployed as soon as they erupt. If Ebola didn't teach us that lesson, COVID-19 surely should.

Khaleej Times

Inside The Mind Of A Drug Addict

PEER FAIZAN BASHIR
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Obviously there are many questions like What is it that takes a normal being into these physical activities, destructive though? Why is it that these life-hollowing drugs the more a man becomes addictive to, wouldn't probably go away from us? Even after, having felt its repercussions, why is not one able to take control over himself, or is left uttering I were to have stopped it that time and this time while dying in self pity!? Or Is there some kind of mystery that lies with the drug-ridden? The answer to all these hardly-considered-over-questions is that: of all the drug-addicts, more than 70 percent have a history of depression, stress, anxiety & many other psychological disorders that they found too difficult to put up with. So, in order to give to the mind a ceaseless rush of dopamine, a chemical in our brain responsible for mood boosting- or giving a temporary feeling of relief, consuming drugs becomes the fitting choice.

There was a time when 'divine signs' were seen in children, but now, it's like a complete reverse of it," in a tone of despair whimpered a very old, frizzled and pale man. Watching through the window, the man enjoined upon me for having a disheartening view of two of his younger children - puffing weed. So much so, their style of talking & bodily movements would quiver with each passing second. Wherefore, I was able to squeeze out the memories of my teen when I too had grown the victim of these life-abrading habits. The clutches of this trap, as far as I could remember, had gripped me to the hilt. None could prevent me from doing so - almost none. It was as if the permanent seal of drugs had been tacked to my heart & mind. For the most part, a person is tend to 'considerably' think over crucial & critical aspects of life, but the whole self of mine was in a state of utter freeze just by its disgrace & medically proven-pernicious effects.

Obviously there are many questions like What is it that takes a normal being into these physical activities, destructive though? Why is it that these life-hollowing drugs the more a man becomes addictive to, wouldn't probably go away from us? Even after, having felt its repercussions, why is not one able to take control over himself, or is left uttering I were to have stopped it that time and this time while dying in self pity!? Or Is there some kind of mystery that lies with the drug-ridden? The answer to all these hardly-considered-over-questions is that: of all the drug-addicts, more than 70 percent have a history of depression, stress, anxiety & many other psychological disorders that they found too difficult to put up with. So, in order to give to the mind a ceaseless rush of dopamine, a chemical in our brain responsible for mood boosting- or giving a temporary feeling of relief, consuming drugs becomes the fitting choice.

There are different drugs available & to be sold & each of them has its own features. The way cannabis can give mo-



mentary a sigh of relief, couldn't probably cigarettes do; & the continuous cycle of consuming one over other becomes the nasty priority! Drugs are the cruellest killers disguising as relief & mood boosters... A sign of stress is indicative of mind demanding something to get the relaxation from; and here the depressed folk becomes an easy prey to drugs - finding it as swifter working alternative than anything else could be doing! When a man has a huge stress over something, to put in this way, he is bound to consuming the substance having mammoth influential features. So that, the temporary relief from the mess could be achieved; but, that is where a man starts to grow addictive.

Drugs, cruellest killers, have a plethora of dreadful effects on our lives. It's been found that taking drugs reduces oxygen level in our veins, thereby affecting our heart. Others (experts in morphology) would say that it alters the

inner structure of mind, thus giving rise to the life-snatching psychological disorders - and then one grows paranoid. Many fears take up his mind and tend to neglect the society. One becomes socially bereft! Some would even - for the inability in dealing with people - consume drugs thereof in secret. Substantial number of them are seeing no way to reclaim their lives, thus adding only to the woes and life becoming sheer predicament.

Having refrained from taking these silent killers, I can say that those that are used to devouring or snuffing or whatever ways they take them in should at least check the status of their lives. They should ask themselves what is it that prompts them to become the easy victim of drugs. Analysing the root causes would do plenty in helping one recover from the predicament. If there is any kind of stress or depression or strain, as the major causes remain so

at most of the times, despite the fact we don't comprehend it at the moment, self-control, meditation etc should be considered, wholeheartedly, instead; or even if one is most glued with these drugs, reduce the quantity of it each time. Wait for the due course. Rise to the occasion and stay away from these killing stuff.

It is noteworthy to mention that those who, fortunately, have not become the victim of these killers, must pay no heed to it ever. For once it has been consumed, one fails to understand what to do and what not. The need of the hour is to aware the unawares regarding the downsides - trap - of taking drugs. We must impart in our education system the whole concept of drugs as to how it affects the health and psychology; and, most importantly, how to waive off our uneasiness at times by mental exercises to keep us calm, secured from the lure of drugs.

There is an urgent need to start a campaign, protest against those dealers and smugglers who dispose of different kinds of drugs whether in manifest or secret to the mentally disturbed victims. The administration ought to put more efforts in cracking whip on such elements. At the same time, instead of penalising the drug takers, they should be given counselling sessions to sort out issues that prompt them to take these drugs in the first place. Furthermore, parents must keep a vigil on their children: from where they are coming, who are they friends with, why are they coming late, what has been done to the pocket-money they get. These are the questions which every parent must pose to their children. Talking freely with your children is an another thing which is needed to reduce any strain eating up their fragile minds.

We will have to do these things for the sake of our people in general. Our children, who are our future generations, in particular. The sooner, the better.

Note: It's equally so serious an issue. Please, consider it. Pic of an author is also attached to this mail...