

‘Brain Day’ to focus on awareness of stroke

A REPORTER — PUBLISHED JUL 22, 2016 06:35AM

ISLAMABAD: In order to raise awareness about the measures one can take to avoid a stroke, World Brain Day will be observed in Pakistan on Friday, according to the recommendations of the World Federation of Neurology (WFN).

The day is being observed to tell the younger generation about the factors that can lead to a stroke or a brain haemorrhage, of which more than 350,000 cases are reported in the country each year.

Talking to Dawn, Dr Waseem Khawaja at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) said the average age for stroke is 60 in western countries and 50 in Pakistan. However, he said, strokes can be avoided by taking precautionary measures.

“Some 13pc of neurological disorders can cause strokes including dementia, headaches, depression, migraines, epilepsy, tumours, traumatic injury, infections, sleep disorders and genetic disorders. Stroke is one of the main causes of disability all over the world.”

He added that the different ways to maintain a healthy brain included avoiding tobacco, controlling blood pressure, sugar and cholesterol, taking vitamins, maintaining a healthy diet. He said people should also wear helmets and follow traffic rules in order to avoid

head injuries that could lead to a stroke.

“It is important to exercise regularly, eat healthy, read and engage in problem solving activities in order to maintain a healthy brain,” he added.

A neurologist at the Aga Khan Hospital, Prof Dr Mohammad Wasay, said in a statement that older people, i.e. those of more than 60 years of age, make up for more than 12pc of the world population, which is more than 800 million people.

He said this number was expected to reach 21pc or two billion people by 2050 due to longer life expectancy.

He said older people would make up the majority of the world population by 2047 and that in 2015 Japan became the first country in the world to sell more adult diapers than those for children.

Older people face more problems due to the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases and disabilities. That is why there is a need to take measures to decrease the chances of such diseases, he said.

“There are different ways to ensure that the brain remains healthy. Stay mentally active by staying curious and involved and committing to lifelong learning, read, write, work puzzles, attend plays or lectures, play games, garden or pursue memory exercises.”

He said people should remain socially active, engage in social and leisure activities by volunteering, travelling or joining social clubs.

“Stay physically active, engage in activities such as

walking, bicycling, gardening, yoga and other activities for about 30 minutes daily to get the body moving and the heart pumping. Adopt a brain-healthy diet, including antioxidant-rich foods and consider taking vitamin supplements,” he added.

Published in Dawn, July 22nd, 2016
