

## Caring for Burn patients



Sister Nar Devi, the Head Nurse at the BIR Hospital Burn Unit, has dedicated much of her life to burns. Let's listen to what she once said when asked about her work:

How did you get involved in the burns care?  
I have been working with burns since year 2000. In 1995, I got the opportunity to attend a special training on burns care in the Vancouver General Hospital in Canada and again in 2005 in Australia, thanks to the Royal Perth Hospital.

What do you feel about your work?

What I like the most about my work is that I can help and care for very poor people.

What difficulties are you facing?

It is difficult because there are big challenges. For the poor, there is no other place than here to get treatment and sometimes there is no bed available and it is very sad to send them back home. Else, we need to ensure enough medical supplies for dressings, fluids, and to be able to offer high protein diet to patients. It is difficult also because there is no possibility for surgery at BIR BU, some patients need to be referred elsewhere for surgery but poor families can not pay.

*(extract from interview, November 2010)*

What are the main difficulties faced by burn survivors?

The poor economic conditions prevent them to get best treatment or afford supplementary food. The burn survivor is often rejected by family and society, disfigurement and psychological problems are the biggest difficulties when they go back home.

Do you receive any support?

The Burn Unit is mainly getting help and support from Wendy and the C.H.A.N.C.E organisation for medical items, nutrition, counselling of patients and physiotherapy. It also happens that visitors give donations. Their support is very important because the needs are very high.

What are the biggest needs in the environment you work in?

I think that the biggest needs for burn patients are the nutrition, the medication, burns creams and pain killers. Physiotherapy is also very important and counselling to the patients and families. Today, in the BU equipments such as ventilators are also missing and we lack manpower.

What else could be done?

I believe that prevention can change many things and we should do more awareness on burns in the society.

### OUR VISION:

The elimination of burns violence in Nepal while supporting and rehabilitating survivors to lead healthy and rewarding lives, when the limited occurrences of burns violence do occur.

### OUR MISSION:

- ▶▶ To support and help survivors of burns with a special attention towards violence survivors.
- ▶▶ To help prevent the occurrence of burns violence through a network of partnerships.

### OUR ACTIONS:

Daily support to burns survivors with medical treatment, counselling, physiotherapy and supplementary nutrition.

Burns are a painful and often crippling disease afflicting 6.6 million people each year. Its victims are frequently disfigured, disabled, stigmatized and shunned. In some parts of the globe, burns affect more children than HIV/AIDS, malaria or tuberculosis.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> «Revised Global Burden of Disease 2002» World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, 2002.

## ASTI Launches BVS-Nepal

Acid Survivors Trust International (ASTI) announced the launch of ASTI's partner charity Burn Violence Survivors – Nepal (BVS-Nepal). The event took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> October at the Embassy of Nepal



in London, UK. Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, ASTI's Patron, attended the event and addressed the guests briefly about her dedication to the cause. The evening was hosted by his Excellency Dr Suresh Chandra Chalise, Nepalese Ambassador to the UK. The guests also included high commissioners from Bangladesh and Pakistan, representatives from Nepalese organisations, major international organisations, charitable foundations and social advocacy groups. Trustees, staff and friends of ASTI also attended the event.

ASTI and the Acid Survivor Foundation community has worked tirelessly for 10 years to stop acid violence, treat injuries and rebuild the lives of burns violence survivors.

BVS-Nepal is an organization that provides medical assistance to the most vulnerable burn patients with a special attention towards burn violence survivors. Funded by a UK-based ASTI, it was established in 2008. Attacks with kerosene and acid, as well as burn-related suicide, often stemming from domestic violence, are issues which are addressed by the organization.

The launch of BVS-Nepal aimed at raising the awareness of the occurrences and issues of burn related violence throughout the world and raise money to support burn survivors and aid the prevention of burn violence in Nepal.

Worldwide, burn is one of the most common and devastating forms of trauma. Burns in Nepal cause an estimated 1700 deaths per year and much suffering.<sup>1</sup>

Problems related to pregnancy, childbirth and burns are main causes of morbidity and mortality of women in Nepal.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Violence and Injury: Prevention Department, World Health Organization, 2008

<sup>2</sup> Health System in Nepal. Dr. Tracey Linn Koehlmooos

## Burning Benevolence

To bring about a change if not a transformation to Nepali Burns Unit, Alison Marston cycled from London to Paris collecting funds. Her intentions were quite



simple: challenge herself to bike and collect funds while she was at it. However the journey was anything but simple. Agreed that the two are neighboring nations, but going uphill and more uphill on a bike, especially when you are not a biker is no joke. "I thought only Nepal had hills, apparently England does too," chuckles Alison. She adds: "It got extremely tiresome at times." But the spirit of mates back at the Bir kept her going. More than 126 people from 60 countries cycled for three and a half days and collected £160000

"It was just friends and relatives who donated", shares Alison. Through her efforts the organization Burns Violence Survivors Nepal (BVS-Nepal), has been bestowed with £2000, which will be used for the betterment of burn patients in Bir Hospital Burn Unit and other government hospitals.

### Nutrition Program at BIR Hospital Burn Unit

A very high protein diet is essential to the healing process of a burn patient since he/she has to fight extreme injuries. Although BIR hospital provides a simple meal to each of its patient, it is yet too insufficient to cover the nutrition requirements of a



burn patient. Beside, such food items are expensive, families are very poor and cannot pay for it. In 2008, Mrs Wendy Marston initiated a Nutrition Support Programme for the burn patients in agreement with the Burn Unit. Dr Joshi listed a Daily Requirement of Nutrition for Burn Patient. This supplementary diet includes:

Egg, milk, sugar, B-protein, biscuit, Glucose D, orange juice, daal(pulse soup) and mutton meat. Since then BVS-Nepal Nutrition Programme is providing every patient at the Burn Unit with additional food items as advised by Dr Joshi. Else, an extra meal is provided to the patient's carer. Twice a month, Ms Prativa and Ms Rumi, of BVS-Nepal, visit the Burn Unit, follow-up on the programme and distribute the food items to the burn patients in cooperation with the medical team of the BIR Hospital Burn Unit. We are helped greatly for this programme by C.H.A.N.C.E.Nepal and Shenpen monastery.

Burn injury is a leading cause of unintentional injuries mainly seen in children less than 5 years of age with physical as well as psychological consequences!  
A three years study at the Western Region Hospital shows that 61% of burns cases are below 15 yrs old?<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr SR Shrestha (Patan Hospital, July-Sept. 2006)  
<sup>2</sup> E. H. Liu, B. Khatri, Y. M. Shakya and B. M. Richard, Western Regional Hospital, Pokhara, Nepal.

### Fire hazard

PAVAN MATHEMA



Sixteen-Year old Emry Prajapati had been preparing conscientiously for her SLC exams last month. One day while trying to light candles at home during a power cut she got severely burnt. The 16-year-old was rushed to hospital with serious burns below her waist. There was only a month to go for the exam and Emry was worried. But last week at the Burns Unit of Bir Hospital there was Emry her legs

bandaged and in considerable pain, taking her SLC accounts paper in the wards with an invigilator and security official in attendance (pictured left). Always someone to look at the bright side, Emry says it was easier to study in the hospital because there was no load-shedding.

### Hospitals register rise in patients burnt during power cuts

She think she'd have performed better if it hadn't been for the accident, but adds she has done well in all her papers. "I hope to get 70 per cent", she says confidently. Megh Raj Bajgain, Emry's science teacher said "Emry is among our most diligent students, we were hoping she'd get a distinction, so we couldn't let the accident discourage her." Bir Hospital has registered an increase in the number of burn cases after the

16-hour daily power cuts went into effect this winter. Says the Burns Unit in-charge Nara Devi Bariya: "There is a burn case very other day, and although not all the cases are because of load shedding, it has certainly increased the risk factor."

Bariya recalls the case of a young man last month who died of 90 percent burns over his body. He had stored petrol in his house because of the fuel shortage. With no electricity, he had been checking up on his fuel stash with a candle. The Kathmandu Fire Brigade also says that fire incidents have significantly increased since load shedding started. For Most Families who can't afford invertors and generators, candles and oil lamps are the only alternative. Combined with the exams, this increased the risk of burns as many students fell asleep while studying at night. ●

(See also: 'A burning issue', #382)

### Burn Physiotherapy Workshop

BVS – Nepal with the technical support of Dr. Dale Edgar, Dr. Hilary Wallace and Mrs. Joy Fong from Royal Perth Hospital, Australia organized a half day 'Burn Physiotherapy Workshop' at Bir hospital on 20th March 2011, which brought together the broad group of burns service providers from different hospitals of the Kathmandu Valley. This participatory workshop served as an opportunity to explore issues related to burns care especially focusing on physiotherapy. This initiation of BVS-Nepal is expected to add a new ground for further collaboration with different hospitals working for burns survivors.



Bir Hospital Burn Unit



Hand Physiotherapy



Mr. Narayan counselling with family

### Our Activities

- BVS-Nepal offers nutrition, medical, counselling and physiotherapy supports to burns survivors in partner hospitals.
- From September 2010 to February 2011, BVS-Nepal Nutrition Program supported 101 burn survivors at the Bir Hospital Burn Unit while 90 burn patients received daily physiotherapy and daily counseling.
- BVS-Nepal medical program helped to cover the medical expenses for 2 burn children and supported 4 acute burn women with plastic surgery.

### Wife set alight breathes her last

KATHMANDU, May 30 (PR)

A woman who was reportedly burnt alive for not giving birth to a son, died Thursday night while undergoing treatment at a hospital in the capital. Ambika Dhamala, 41, a resident of Chabahil, was seriously injured after her husband Murari, 45, allegedly burnt her alive after dousing her with kerosene inside their house. Murari Dhamala, who is a government official, allegedly committed the crime on May 22. Police arrested him on the charge of attempted murder.

Ambika's little daughter Richa, who was studying in another room at the time, had come to her rescue, said police. After the rescue bid, Ambika was taken to Bir

hospital for treatment.

According to police, the front part of her body was badly burnt. Ambika breathed her last at around 10 p.m., Thursday.

Following her death, enraged relatives surrounded the Metropolitan Police Circle office at Bouddha and staged protest demanding stern action against her husband. Dozens of relatives chanted slogans against Murari Dhamala and disrupted vehicular movements outside the Police office for nearly two hours.

Meanwhile, the protesting and grieving family members and relatives performed Ambika's last rites in the evening following a post-mortem at TU teaching hospital, Maharajgunj, family members said.

### VALENTINE'S DAY FUNDS



Pupils of the British School of Kathmandu Kencho Ongdi and her sisters held a Valentine's Day event selling red roses and home-baked cupcakes. They raised the astonishing amount of Nrs. 17,875.- which bought 31 jars of special burns cream for the Burns unit. A big thank you !

### YOUR SMALL CONTRIBUTION CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

We would like to thank all our partners, supporters and well-wishers for their consistent dedication and support throughout and we look forward to continuing our work together in the coming years for burn survivors in Nepal.

A special thank to Wendy and Alison whose support contributed significantly towards achieving our set of objectives for the year.

Contact us: BVS NEPAL, GPO Box 8975, EPC 1720, Kathmandu, Nepal, e-mail: burnsurvivorsnepal@gmail.com, http://www.bvsnepal.org.np

If you would like to make a donation: BVS-N, Bank of Asia Nepal Limited, Kathmandu, Nepal for credit to our Account No.03CL012928NPR001