

Aneurysm

July 22, 2022

In news— Actor Emilia Clarke, who played the role Daenerys Targaryen in the series Game of Thrones, recently told BBC One in an interview that she had suffered two brain aneurysms while filming for the series.

What is an aneurysm?

- Aneurysm is **a swelling of arteries, and veins in any part of the body, and is caused by weakening of the walls.**
- It **occurs most commonly in the aorta, back of the knees, brain or intestines.** If the aneurysm gets ruptured, it can even cause internal bleeding and stroke.
- Blood vessels of the brain and the heart are the most common locations to get seriously affected.
- It is a weak area in the blood vessel's wall that occasionally ruptures and results in a subarachnoid hemorrhage (SAH).
- Due to the steady flow of blood, that weak portion of the blood vessel wears out and bulges out, nearly like a bubble. It can expand to be as big as a tiny berry.
- **The swelling can be of two types.** Either the **complete blood vessel is swollen or a specific side** of the blood vessel can bulge out from the sides.
- **Potential risk factors for aneurysm include smoking, age, high cholesterol, obesity, hypertension** or tissue disorders. **Pregnancy can also increase risk of aneurysm of the spleen.**
- **Usually, an aneurysm remains undetected** and screening may be required for patients needing monitoring or treatment.
- MRI scans are useful for identifying aneurysms that do not rupture but the symptoms are prevalent.
- An angiogram may be performed in extreme cases with

severe rupture and bleeding in the brain to identify the exact area for treatment.

- **A device called flow diversion stent is a new innovative intervention for treatment of aneurysm** for the initial stages, when it has not ruptured.
- A cylindrical, metallic mesh stent is placed inside the sac of the parent blood vessel to divert the blood flow from the aneurysm.
- The diversion is aimed at preventing rupture. Flow diversion can be used to treat large or giant wide-necked brain aneurysms.
- **Most cases being congenital, it is not always possible to prevent aneurysm,** but certain lifestyle changes can help reduce risk.
- These include quitting smoking; maintaining a healthy blood pressure by sticking to a balanced diet; maintaining a healthy body weight; and avoiding a high cholesterol diet.