

Deaths of children from AES

1807. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that deaths of more than 100 children occurred due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)/fever called “Chamki” in Bihar and other parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government’s reaction thereto;

(c) whether some medical professionals are convinced that lychees are the cause of deaths; and

(d) if so, Government’s response thereto indicating the exact reasons of infant deaths?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY): (a) and (b) A total of 162 deaths of children are reported from Bihar (till 02.07.2019) due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) in 2019. From the other states of country viz. Assam, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, a total of 63 deaths due to AES are reported up to 30.06.2019.

As per Constitutional provisions, ‘Health’ is a State subject. However, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) have taken measures to support State in containment and management of AES cases as follows:—

- Union Health and Family Welfare Minister (HFM) had reviewed the situation with Health Minister of Bihar and also with officials from Ministry.
- MoHFW had deputed a Central team of experts consisting of Public Health Specialist from various Central Government Institutes to assist the State Government in containment and management measures.
- HFM visited Bihar along with Minister of State (HFW) and team of officers. HFM reviewed the situation and also visited Shri Krishna Medical College and Hospital, (SKMCH), Muzaffarpur.
- MoHFW deployed another high level multi-disciplinary team to Muzaffarpur drawing senior Paediatricians from various central government Institutes to advise state in their efforts to manage the cases. Epidemiologists from National Center for Disease Control (NCDC), senior paediatricians, Laboratory technicians from central level are present in Muzaffarpur since 12th June, 2019.

- Strategic Health Operations Centre (SHOC) facility of NCDC was activated to monitor the AES situation in Muzaffarpur and co-ordinate tasks at the field level.
- MoHFW had further deputed 5 teams of Doctors along with technicians from Central Government Hospitals to SKMCH to support clinical management.
- Central team consisting experts from Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) was also deployed at SKMCH. The team is also scrutinising and reviewing the case records of discharge and deceased patients using a standardised tool to know the reasons for mortality.
- Orientation training of all Paediatricians of SKMCH on clinical case management and treatment protocol of AES was conducted on regular basis by the Central Team of paediatricians.

(c) and (d) Consumption of Litchi is safe in healthy individuals. A research study was conducted by National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) along with partner institutions in the year 2013-14 wherein it has been found that when litchi is consumed by malnourished children, few of these children may develop hypoglycaemia. However, this study was based on data of limited factors in which some research areas were not fully defined.

Accordingly, Government has constituted inter-disciplinary, high quality research team under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) involving various stakeholders, such as, the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Women and Child Department, Indian Academy of Paediatrics, Indian Meteorological Department, National Institute of Nutrition, NCDC.

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1808. SHRI P. BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that a large number of children in various parts of the country have died in the past few months due to life taking fever such as AES;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has asked for a detailed report from the State Governments;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and