

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:240  
ANSWERED ON:17.12.2003  
HEPATITIS CASES  
ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY;SHYAMA SINGH

**Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether Hepatitis is more dangerous than AIDS as reported in the Hindu dated November 23, 2003;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof;
- (c) whether no patent medicine is available for Hepatitis C in the country and its treatment is costly;
- (d) if so, whether the Government has assessed the exact number of patients suffering from Hepatitis C;
- (e) if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether the Union Government has included Hepatitis in the National Programme; and (g) if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 240 FOR 17-12-2003.

The Hindu newspaper on 23rd November, 2003, reported that Hepatitis is more dangerous than AIDS. It is true that the person infected with AIDS remains infected for life and the disease can only be controlled. According to ICMR, Hepatitis B infection is several times more infectious than AIDS.

There are five common types of Hepatitis i.e. A, B, C, D, and E. Hepatitis - A is benign as compared to the other types. Out of the remaining four i.e. Hepatitis B, C, D, and E, only for Hepatitis B there is a vaccine. For Hepatitis - C though there is no vaccine, there is a treatment with Interferon and Ribavirin which costs about Rs. 13,000/- (Rupees thirteen thousand) per week or atleast Rs. 2.00 lakh (Rupees two lakhs) for a six month course.

Limited studies undertaken in small population have indicated the prevalence of Hepatitis-C in general population as 0.15 - 0.78% and in the blood donors as 0.2 - 1.85%.

Since Hepatitis - A is benign and out of the remaining four, vaccine is available only for Hepatitis - B, the Government of India has launched a pilot project of Hepatitis - B for children below one year only. During 2002-03, fifteen cities and during 2003-04, thirty-two districts and Andaman & Nicobar Islands have been selected for Hepatitis- B vaccination. ....