

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1245  
ANSWERED ON:07.03.2007  
VACCINATION FOR INDIANS IN S. ARABIA  
Deora Shri Milind Murlu

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

- (a) whether Saudi Arabia has made it mandatory for Indians visiting that country to have Polio Vaccination;
- (b) the reaction of the Indian Government in this regard;
- (c) whether the decision of Saudi Arabia has any adverse impact on the Haj Pilgrims;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the decision of the Saudi Arabia is the result of the recommendation of the Global Advisory Committee on Polio eradication;
- (f) if so, the recommendations of the said Committee;
- (g) whether the recommendations of the Committee were given wide publicity before the commencement of Haj pilgrimage; and
- (h) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Saudi Embassy intimated that based on WHO recommendations, people arriving in Saudi Arabia would be required to have polio drops a month before their arrival in the Kingdom.

On receipt of the information Ministry of Health has made necessary arrangements for administration of Oral Polio Vaccine and issue of a certificate to the Haj pilgrims before their departure from the country for Saudi Arabia.

No adverse impact on Haj pilgrims on account of this move has been received in this Ministry or in the Ministry of External Affairs as well as our Missions in Saudi Arabia.

(e) Yes Sir.  
The recommendations of the Global Advisory Committee on Polio eradication is at Annexure.

(f) to (h) Yes, Sir.  
All State Governments were required to make necessary arrangements at the Health Centers to administer Oral Polio Vaccine to Haj pilgrims. They were also requested to set up polio booths at the Air ports as well as at the office of State Haj Committee. The Haj committee issued Press release to all the allied Agencies, viz State/ Union Territory Haj Committees, through Leading newspapers throughout the country. Various State Haj Committees, particularly those handling the Embarkation Points has set up Polio Booths at all the district hospitals, rural hospitals, selected primary health centers, corporation hospitals, Haj Camps and also at the Airports of the Embarkation Points.

Annexure

Referred to in reply to Part (e) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.1245 Due for answer on 7-3-2007.

Recommendations of the Global Advisory Committee on Polio Eradication :

A multi-pronged strategy is needed to address the risk of international spread of circulating polio virus. In addition to the technical recommendation previously made by the ACPE, the following steps should be taken to reduce the risk of international spread of wild polio virus.

Countries bordering the endemic areas of Nigeria and India should continue to conduct SIA rounds of an appropriate scale annually until transmission in the neighboring endemic reservoir is interrupted.

The WHO publication 'International Travel and Health' should be updated to recommend that all travellers to polio infected areas

should be fully immunized against poliomyelitis in accordance with national policy. Individuals without a prior history of polio immunization should complete a full primary series by one month prior to the date of intended travel. Previously immunized individuals should receive a booster dose between one and twenty-four months prior to travel.

A Standing Recommendation on polio immunization for travellers from polioinfected areas should be established under the International Health Regulations 2005. Among other provisions, this should recommend that:

- a) individuals who have not completed a full series of polio immunization should complete a full primary series by at least one month prior to the date of intended travel,
- b) previously immunized individuals should receive a booster dose of OPV between one month and twenty-four months prior to travel, and
- c) individuals undertaking travel on short notice ( i.e. less than one month before departure) should receive a dose of polio vaccine prior to departure.

The immunization of travellers arriving from polio-infected areas with a single dose of polio vaccine at the point of entry may reduce the risk of spread of an imported virus.

The vaccine of choice for immunizing travellers from polio infected areas is trivalent OPV.

These recommendations should remain in effect for a minimum of 6 months after detection of the last wild poliovirus in the polio-infected area. If certification standard surveillance is not in place in the infected country, the recommendation should remain in effect for a minimum of 12 months.

WHO should take immediate steps to ensure appropriate polio expertise is available to the expert roster for the IHR (2005).