

12.03 hrs.

Title: Statement by the Minister, Health and Family Welfare regarding reported outbreak of Leptospirosis in Maharashtra and Gujarat.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): Sir, recently, Practitioners from North-West of Mumbai and adjacent area from Thane district (Malad-Virar) as well as from Central part of Thane district (Kalyan), reported increase in fever with a typical feature like bleeding and hepato-renal failure with involvement of lungs and high mortality. The practitioners from Mumbai suspected Leptospirosis. Immediately concerned officers from the State visited the places and carried out the basic investigation, including entomological studies and gave directions regarding control.

To meet the crisis a meeting of Officers from Health Services, Medical Education and Research and Municipal Corporations was convened in the Directorate of Health Services, Mumbai on 29th July, 2000. The possibilities considered for increased fever cases were Leptospirosis, Dengue Fever and P. falciparum (Malaria). Technical guidelines for laboratory investigations and treatment were given all over the State. Medical Teams were formed to assess the extent of the outbreak, which have been functioning in the field. The State level rapid response team along with team from National Institute of Virology, Pune has already carried out investigations. For confirmation of Leptospirosis and investigating the outbreak, a team from the Indian Council of Medical Research has also reached Mumbai.

CASES AND DEATHS FROM THE REPORTED LEPTOSPIROSIS FROM MAHARASHTRA AND GUJARAT (AS ON 5 P.M., 2ND AUGUST, 2000):

In Maharashtra the total reported cases are 250 and the deaths are six and in Gujarat the total reported cases are 61 and deaths are eight.

Of the 250 cases in Maharashtra laboratory confirmation was available in 65 cases.

Leptospirosis is a zoonotic bacterial disease caused by leptospire of which there are many sero-groups and serovars. A number of Leptospirosis outbreaks have been reported in India in the past namely, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It causes a wide variety of clinical manifestations. Jaundice and haemorrhagic manifestations are present in typical cases. At times cases may be misdiagnosed as viral fever, dengue haemorrhagic fever, malaria etc.

Mode of transmission:

Contact with skin (with cuts and bruises) and mucous membrane with water soil or vegetation contaminated with urine of infected animals like rats, pigs, cattle, dogs etc. leads to infection in man.

Treatment and Prevention

Specific treatment with anti-microbials is effective if started early in the course of illness. Penicillin, cephalosporins, doxycycline, erythromycin are all effective. Preventive measures include elimination or minimization of human contact with contaminated water, soil or vegetation. Proper protective clothing such as boots and gloves are recommended in areas where risk is perceived to be high.

Diagnosis is based on serological tests and isolation of leptospirosis from the blood and urine. Facilities for serological disease are available with NICD, ICMR and several medical institutions including State Government Hospitals and medical colleges.

On the direction of the Director-General, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Director, Regional Medical Research Centre, Port Blair has reached Mumbai to help in carrying out investigations to confirm the diagnosis. A team from National Institute of Communicable Diseases has also been deputed to assist the State health authorities in containment and investigation.

The Central Government is seized of the matter and closely monitoring the situation.

All Central assistance required and considered necessary will be provided to the State Government.
