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Title: Regarding stem cell therapy procedure -laid.

**DR. SUBHASH RAMRAO BHAMRE (DHULE):** The Stem cells have great potential to treat many incurable conditions that otherwise cause death and disability. India has more than 2.5 crores Divyang citizens who can benefit from this. Indian Doctors from Government as well as Private Hospitals are playing leadership role in this field. There are many pioneering Indian scientific publications on this subject. The main problem faced by this field today is that there is divergence of policy between the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). On the one hand, CDSCO policies are supportive of cell therapy procedure done by Doctors. On the other hand, the policy of the ICMR is extremely restrictive. ICMR has made guideline (NGSCR 2017), which permits only the use of branded stem cells manufactured by private companies for commercial use but prevent Government and other private Hospitals from using generic stem cells for treatment. Due to the restrictive policies of ICMR, some of India's most prestigious institutes such as AIIMs, New Delhi and several other prominent hospitals have not been given approval by the ICMR. Whereas, certain commercial private companies have been granted permission. A real-life example of how ICMR guidelines are resulting in increased patient suffering is of a Railway Hospital of Vadodara where stem cells are being used to save patients from leg amputations. From 64 legs which were to be amputated, 57 were saved using stem cells.

This treatment was done free of cost. ICMR intervention, however, resulted in stopping this programme. The result of ICMR's intervention is that from the last 3 years, this excellent work has stopped, and Railway workers' legs which could be saved by stem cell therapy are being cut.