

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:78
ANSWERED ON:29.02.2000
RESEARCH ON AIDS
RAMDAS ATHAWALE

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

- (a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned `AIDS ke elaj ke liye garibdeshe ki aurato par prayog` appearing in the `Danik Jagran` dated January 8, 2000;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof;
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM)

(a)to(d): A statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 78 TO BE ANSWERED ON 29-2-2000

(a)to(d): The Government is seized of the news report. The HIV prevalence rates amongst pregnant women attending public hospitals has shown a rising trend, particularly in the states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Manipur. The risk of HIV transmission from an infected mother to her new born child is approximately 30%. The transmission of HIV infection from mother to child can be reduced by giving anti-retroviral drug known as Zidovudine (AZT). This has been well demonstrated in various parts of the world, including Thailand. The drug, AZT, has been shown to be safe and capable of decreasing incidents of mother to child transmission. Hence, it is now an established treatment. The drug Zidovudine is now locally manufactured in Glaxo Laboratories and costs Rs.18/- per tablet/capsule. The course of treatment including drug cost under this regimen costs Rs.6,000/- per person. Zidovudine is a drug which is already registered by the Drug Controller General of India under the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 for use in the country.

In order to reduce mother to child transmission of HIV, Government of India has decided to initiate feasibility study of administering short course regimen of AZT in HIV positive pregnant women. Eleven institutions, located in areas with high level of HIV prevalence in pregnant women, have been selected in the states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Manipur. The list of the institutions is annexed

A comprehensive study protocol has been devised by Government of India in consultation with experts in the field and participating institutions to cover the various aspects like enrolment criteria of the antenatal women in this feasibility study, counselling, time to time evaluation and follow up of both mother and child. The entire study is purely voluntary and based on informed consent of the women who wish to be enrolled for treatment. The study has been cleared by the Ethical Committees of the participating institutions as well as National Ethical Committee of the Indian Council of Medical Research.

Based on the outcome of this feasibility study, Government of India would consider to enlarge the programme to cover other areas in these states and other states in the long run. If successful, this will decrease the number of neonatal HIV infected children who are a major problem in the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which is an important strategy for prevention of HIV/AIDS from spreading into the general community.

ANNEXURE

LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PILOT PROJECT -

‘FEASIBILITY STUDY OF ADMINISTERING SHORT-TERM AZT INTERVENTION AMONGST HIV INFECTED MOTHERS TO PREVENT MOTHER TO CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV IN INDIA.’

S.No. Name of the Institute/Address

1. Govt. R.S.R.M Lying-in Hospital, Chennai-600013
2. Govt. Kasturba Gandhi Hospital For Women & Children, Chennai - 600 005
3. IOG & Govt. Hospital for Women and Children, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008
4. Bangalore Medical College, Fort, Bangalore - 560002
5. Sir J.J. Group of Hospitals, Mumbai - 400 008
6. BYL Nair Charitable Hospital, Dr. A.L. Nair Road, Mumbai - 400 008
7. KEM Hospital, Mumbai
8. General Hospital, Sangli-416416 (Maharashtra)
9. B.J. Medical College, Pune-411001 (Maharashtra)
10. Osmania Medical College, Koti, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh - 500 095
11. Jawaharlal Nehru College, Imphal.