

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2627

ANSWERED ON:31.07.2002

ZINC AND IRON DEFICIENCY IN CHILDREN

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

- (a) whether 75 per cent of Indian children suffer from iron deficiency and 40 per cent suffer from zinc deficiency;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is a fact that the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in association with the Delhi Municipal Corporation launched a massive exercise in Delhi to study the effect of zinc on mortality and morbidity of children under the age of 2 years;
- (d) if so, the number of children on whom experiment is being conducted;
- (e) the period over which the result of this experiment is expected to be known; and
- (f) how the supervision about keeping a daily watch and maintaining record of each and every child is being done?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a)&(b): As per the National Family Health Survey-2 (1998-99), 74 per cent of children in the age group six to thirty five months were found to be anemic. Limited studies from North India indicate that 30-40 per cent children from low socio-economic groups, in the age group six to thirty five months, have low levels of plasma zinc.

(c)to(e): Yes, Sir. The All India Institute of Medical Sciences and Municipal Corporation of Delhi have started a pilot project to study the effect of zinc and iron deficiency in children. The objectives of this study include an assessment to see whether improved intake of zinc will reduce mortality and severe morbidity such as diarrhoea, pneumonia, septicemia and meningitis and improve physical growth of children. About 80,000 children are included in the study which will be completed in two years time.

(f): The supplement is administered to children by trained community health workers of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. This activity is supervised by physicians and supervisors trained by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. The community health workers maintain a register in which daily intake of the supplement is recorded. The register is reviewed every week by a supervisor trained by All India Institute of Medical Sciences. All this information is computerized and reviewed by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences team of pediatricians.