

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3594  
ANSWERED ON:07.08.2002  
THALIDONIDE DRUG FOR CANCER  
A. VENKATESH NAIK;RAMSHETH THAKUR;V. VETRISELVAN

**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 `Government dithers on lifeline for cancer patients` appeared in the Times of India dated July 19, 2002;
- (b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Thalidomide is well known to cause severe birth defects and because of this, the drug was banned all over the world. However, based on the evidence and study reports, USFDA allowed the drug Thalidomide for treatment of leprosy complications for which no good alternative therapies are available for such patients. Thalidomide has also been found useful in the treatment of refractory cases of multiple myeloma. Dr. J.K. Grover Additional Professor, Pharmacology AIIMS, New Delhi had conducted trial on patients of multiple myeloma, for which Thalidomide tablets were supplied by M/s. Gruenthal, Germany. M/s. Gruenthal, Germany, subsequently discontinued the supply of the drug seeking an Undertaking from the Government in the form of an Agreement. The firm has now agreed to resume the supply of the drug through Central Leprosy Training and Research Institute, Chingelpet as per previous agreement.