

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2783
ANSWERED ON:10.05.2006
SPREAD OF SICKLE CELL DISEASE
Ahir Shri Hansraj Gangaram;Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the current spread of sickle cell disease in tribal areas of Maharashtra and other States;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has any proposal for setting up permanent centres for the treatment and diagnosis of sickle cell in the country, particularly in Dhule and Gadchiroli in Maharashtra;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken/assistance provided by the Union Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) & (b): The Government is aware of the sizeable numbers of Sickle cell diseases (SCD) in the tribal areas of Maharashtra however there is no spread of disease. This is a genetic disorder which has been found to be more prevalent in the tribal populations and also in some ethnic groups and general populations. Because of the increasing awareness and technology to be able to screen the disease its detection has become easier.

Research has been going on for the last 2 decades and has shown the carrier frequency in SCD to vary between 6-32% among various tribal populations of Maharashtra. The disease is also prevalent in other States viz. Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. ICMR has established a Regional Medical Research Centre exclusively for tribals at Jabalpur (MP) which is also involving in carrying out studies on SCD in Central India.

(c) to (e): Yes, Institute of Immunohaematology, Mumbai of the Indian Council of Medical Research has done a lot of work on SCD. ICMR had conducted a study on a simple intervention method to reduce sickle cell crisis in affected children in 7 States. The Model has been handed over to the States Govt. for implementation. Many projects has been carried out in various parts of Maharashtra like Dhule, Chandrapur, Godchiroli, Yavatmal, Nagpur, Pune, Raigod, Nasik, Ahmednagar etc. and research centers were established.

Government of Maharashtra has recently formed a committee to develop a hierarchical system of management, counseling and screening of these effected populations. Rural Hospitals will be initial contact point and difficult cases would be referred to identified district hospitals and regional centers. ICMR's Institute of Immunohaematology, Mumbai will be the optical centers for training people involved in taking care of the patients. Many pilot projects on disease management and disease intervention with state and National Health Programmes using cost affective methodologies have been completed some of which were funded by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.