

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:338

ANSWERED ON:26.07.2006

HIV AIDS PATIENTS

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

- (a) whether India has about 5.7 million HIV/AIDS patients as against 5.5 million in South Africa, as reported by UNAIDS;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether NACO has set up an expert high-level committee to examine the validity of the methodology adopted by UNAIDS;
- (d) if so, the details of the finding thereof;
- (e) whether a small percentage of HIV/AIDS patients received anti-retroviral therapy and only 1.6 percent of pregnant women who needed treatment to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission were receiving it;
- (f) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (g) the measures being taken to improve the access to medicine and treatment to the HIV patients in the country?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (d) : According to Annual Sentinel Surveillance conducted in 750 designated sites in the country, there are an estimated 5.2 million HIV infected persons in the age group 15-49. This estimation has also been validated by WHO and UNAIDS. However, UNAIDS for the first time extrapolated this estimate of 5.2 million to arrive at 5.7 million for all age groups using various other assumptions which require to be validated. An Expert High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of DG, ICMR and members from the academic institutions including WHO and UNAIDS has been constituted to review the mortality estimates used by UNAIDS and will alongside be also examining the validity of the assumptions and methodologies used for estimation infection levels in the whole population. The committee will submit the report by the end of this year.

(e) to (g) : Government of India started Anti-retroviral Treatment Programme (ART) in 2004. As on date there are about 35,000 patients receiving free antiretroviral drugs in 54 public hospitals and there are 2155 integrated Counseling and Testing centers providing services for prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV. As 90% of the HIV infected persons do not know their status, a large number of HIV infected persons remain un-detected and therefore untreated. However, with the expansion of the programme, a large number of mothers and patients needing ART will be covered. The drugs for treating about 85,000 patients has already been procured for an additional 46 centres that will start functioning from end of this month.