

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5676

ANSWERED ON:16.05.2007

DEVELOPMENT OF CHEAP HEPATITIS-C DRUG

Khaira Shri Chandrakant Bhaurao;Lagadapati Shri Rajagopal;Vallabbhaneni Shri Balashowry

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

- (a) whether the 15 million people have chronic hepatitis-C in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (c) whether an Indian Professor of infectious diseases have developed a cheap hepatitis-C drug at Imperial College with the help of London School of Pharmacy;
- (d) if so, whether they have approached Union Government for co-sponsoring the clinical trials;
- (e) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (f) whether the testing of affordable hepatitis-C drug is also going on in other laboratories of the country;
- (g) if so, the details thereof;
- (h) the likely cost of the drug; and
- (i) the time by which the human tests of this drug is likely to be completed?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) As informed by ICMR, it is estimated that there are 12.5 million Hepatitis-C virus (HCV) carriers in the country. It is generally accepted that chronic hepatitis occurs in about 55% of HCV infected individuals within 15-20 years of infection. Data regarding people infected with HCV is not maintained State-wise.

(c) to
(i) According to Hammersmith Research News dated 2nd October 2006, a team led by Prof. Sunil Shaunak and comprising researchers from Hammersmith hospital, Imperial college, London School of Pharmacy has claimed that the new drug 'Pegylated interferon' for treatment of Hepatitis-B is effective in curing Hepatitis-C also. However no request for clinical trials of the drug has been received by the Government.