

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3486
ANSWERED ON:16.04.2008
MULTI DRUG RESISTANT TB PATIENTS
Verma Shri Ravi Prakash

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

- (a) whether the drugs commonly used to treat tuberculosis have failed to cure an estimated 70,000 Indian annually as reported in 'The Times of India' dated March 24, 2008;
- (b) if so, the details of the facts reported therein and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the number of Multi Drug Resistant (MDR)-TB patients have increased in the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Union Government proposes to combat the Multi-Drug Resistant-TB (MDR-TB); and
- (f) if so, the steps taken by the Union Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) No Sir. Studies conducted nationally and internationally have shown that the drugs used for treatment of TB are nearly 100% effective if administered in appropriate combination and doses for the prescribed duration to drug susceptible patients. The programme experience has shown that it is not the failure of the drugs per se but the failure to take the treatment which results in unfavourable outcomes. The failure rate amongst patients registered for treatment under RNTCP has consistently been ~2% for new cases and ~5% for re-treatment cases.

(c) & (d) No, Sir. Drug resistance surveillance studies undertaken in the past by premier institutes like TRC, Chennai and NTI Bangalore and the state level studies undertaken in Gujarat and Maharashtra recently have shown that the prevalence of multi-drug resistant TB has not increased over the past several years and is estimated to be ~3% in new cases and 12-17% in re-treatment cases. The ongoing drug resistance surveillance undertaken by TRC in its study area has actually shown a decrease in the prevalence of MDR TB.

(e) Yes Sir. Despite the low prevalence, the programme is viewing the threat posed by the potential emergence of the drug resistant TB to TB control seriously and develop a multi faceted strategy to address this.

(f) The programme emphasizes on the prevention of MDR-TB through sustained high quality DOTS implementation by all health care providers in the public and private sector.

Effective management of MDR TB requires accurate diagnosis and follow up through culture and DST. The programme is in the process of establishing a network of accredited Culture and Drug Susceptibility testing Intermediate Reference Laboratories(IRL) across the country, at least one in each state, in a phased manner for diagnosis and follow up of MDR TB patients. The IRL at Gujarat and Maharashtra have been accredited recently. Another 10 IRLs are under the accreditation process and are expected to be accredited in 2008. The remaining IRLs will be accredited in 2009-10. The diagnosed MDR cases will be treated as per the DOTS Plus guidelines developed by the programme, in line with the international recommendations. The treatment will be provided at the DOTS Plus sites at least one in each state, with qualified staff to manage the patients, and have a system to deliver ambulatory DOT after an initial short period of in-patient care. The DOTS Plus services have been rolled out in the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra in 2007. Remaining states will be covered under DOTS Plus by 2009-10.