

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3634

ANSWERED ON:16.04.2010

LOW COST HIV/AIDS MEDICINES AND DEVICES

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken up the matter with the drug manufacturers to make HIV/AIDS drugs available at the lower prices;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the new pricing range of the drugs;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to give further subsidy on the cost of such medicines to make them available to the poor HIV positive/AIDS patients in the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government is also extending financial and technical assistance for the development of low cost kit/devices to diagnose and treat such fatal diseases; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the achievements made in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE(SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

(a) &(b) No.

(c) & (d) The Antiretroviral drugs for treatment of HIV/AIDS patients are provided free of cost at 269 ART centres across the country. Presently, more than 3 lakh patients are receiving these drugs free.

(e) & (f) Yes. Two cost effective indigenous diagnostic kits namely Naked Eye Visual Agglutination (NEVA) of erythrocytes and Western Immunoblot assay have been developed. Both these diagnostic kits have sensitivity and specificity of more than 99%. The NEVA test can detect HIV-1/II infections in 2-3 minutes and it costs around Rs. 20/- per sample. The Western Immunoblot assay confirms the HIV-1/II infections and costs about Rs. 450/- per test sample. The identical Western Immunoblot kits cost about Rs. 1200/- per test sample. Both of these kits have been launched in the market by Indian Pharmaceuticals Industries, namely M/s Cadila Pharmaceuticals, Ahmedabad and M/s J. Mitra & Company, New Delhi. The Western Immunoblot Kits have been exported to countries like Indonesia & Malaysia while rapid NEVA kit is being exported to Kenya and Nigeria.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have been apprised of the availability of these diagnostic kits for use in the sentinel surveillance for HIV/AIDS by National AIDS Control Organisation.