

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:91
ANSWERED ON:30.07.2010
PALLIATIVE CARE
Tharoor Shri Shashi

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

- (a) whether a large number of people suffering from incurable diseases like cancer, AIDS, paralysis, etc. die every year due to lack of palliative care;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Regional Cancer Centres (RCCs) do not have effective palliative care service even though it is an essential part of the National Cancer Control Programme;
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the budget allocation earmarked by the RCCs for the purpose;
- (e) the reasons for non-availability of oral morphine, an essential medicine as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for the purpose, in RCCs as well as in the Government Hospitals;
- (f) whether the Government proposes to make pain relief and palliative care an essential component of the medical education in the country; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a)to(g): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.91 FOR 30TH JULY, 2010

It is estimated that the number of persons suffering from chronic non communicable diseases is increasing and overall non communicable diseases constitute more than 40% of all deaths in the country. However, it is not possible to define the number that die due to a lack of palliative care, which essentially aims to improve the quality of life of patients through treatment of pain and related problems.

Palliative care for patients is a component of the National Cancer Control Programme, and 17 of 27 regional cancer centres provide palliative care services. However, full fledged departments or units are not available in most regional cancer centres. The Central Government provides funds for civil works and equipments to these centres, while the State Government or concerned institutions provide services and funds for remaining activities, which includes preventive diagnostic treatment and palliative services for Cancer Control.

The availability and use of morphine is governed by Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, and the Drugs and Cosmetic Act, 1940.

Palliative Care forms a part of some post graduate courses in medical education.