

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4083

ANSWERED ON:03.12.2010

RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS AND DISEASES

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

- (a) whether India records the highest number of deaths caused by respiratory infections and diseases such as pneumonia, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) etc. in the world;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether there is lack of trained doctors, pharmaceutical research and also awareness about such diseases among the masses;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the corrective measures taken/ proposed by the Government to address the problem?

**Answer**

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

(a) & (b): As per the information provided by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), India records the highest number of deaths caused by respiratory infections. The causes of lower respiratory infections are Pneumonias, Bronchiolitis due to viral infections like Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and influenza virus. The reasons for Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI) in children below five years of age are malnutrition with multiple micronutrient deficiency, overcrowding, LRTI in the family, use of biomass fuels and non-immunization against measles.

(c): No.

(d): Does not arise.

(e): Various interventions are being implemented for bringing down infant and child mortality rates as part of the Reproductive and Child Health programme that includes Universal Immunization Program against six vaccine preventable diseases, acute respiratory infection control programme, diarrhoeal disease control programme and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme etc. The Government is also implementing the Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood illness (IMNCI) in 160 districts. The strategy includes assessment and treatment of children at community level with a referral mechanism, system support and by improving family and community practices.

Further, National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) aims to improve access of people, especially the poor women and children, to quality primary healthcare services. The Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) is a major strategic intervention under the mission. The ASHA is a trained woman community health volunteer who plays a key role in spreading awareness among the people of the need of universal immunization and in improving their access to preventive and promotive healthcare.