

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5126
ANSWERED ON:26.04.2013
STEM CELL RESEARCH FOR SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any study/survey to ascertain the prevalence of sickle cell anaemia, particularly among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes communities residing in remote, hilly and rural areas of the country;
- (b) if so, the details and the outcome thereof, State/UT-wise;
- (c) the details of proposals/suggestions received in this regard from various quarters including Sickle Cell Society of India, Nagpur and the action taken/proposed by the Government thereon;
- (d) the details of the research projects including stem cell research undertaken to control sickle cell anaemia and the outcome thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken/proposed by the Government to encourage stem cell research to control sickle cell anaemia and set up institutes/hospitals for the purpose?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABIAZAD)

(a) & (b) Yes. As per the National Multicentric Study carried on behalf of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) (2000-2005), the sickle cell gene was present in all the tribal groups and the gene frequency varied from 0.005 to 0.110. This disease is largely but not exclusively restricted to tribal groups. Sickle Cell Disease is prevalent throughout Central India starting from Gujarat and Maharashtra in the West and through Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand upto the Eastern State of Odisha.

(c) : Sickle Cell Society of India, Nagpur has sent a representation regarding setting up of Molecular Genetic Laboratories in the tribal areas where the prevalence of sickle cell anaemia is higher.

Health is a State subject and State Governments are providing various health care facilities. However, support is being provided to States and UTs under NRHM for strengthening the health care facilities. Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakrama (RBSK) recently launched under NRHM provides for early detection and treatment of sickle cell anaemia among children. State Governments can submit proposals for treatment of sickle cell anaemia cases in their respective Programme Implementation Plans (PIPs) for consideration of central assistance under NRHM.

(d) & (e): According to ICMR, no stem cell research project has been undertaken to control sickle cell anaemia. There is no proposal to set up institute / hospital for the purpose of stem cell research to control sickle cell anaemia.