

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2205

ANSWERED ON:06.05.2016

Myopia among Children

Ram Shri Vishnu Dayal

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

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that a large number of children have been found suffering from Myopia due to excessive use of electronic gadgets in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the percentage increase in the said cases during the last three years; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to protect the children against the said diseases?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

(SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)

(a) & (b): The specific data with regard to the children suffering from Myopia due to excessive use of electronic gadgets in the country is not available under the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

However, studies conducted in school going children in Delhi Schools, have shown an increase in the prevalence of myopia of 5.7% over a period of 15 years. This is expected to be lower in rural areas.

This increase is particularly due to lifestyle changes, such as decrease in outdoor activities and increase in activities including seeing objects at a close distance like using laptops, computers, videogames and longer reading hours.

(c): Various steps have been taken under NPCB and Rashtriya Bal Swasthy Karyakaram (RBSK) under the National Health Mission to protect the children against the said disease:

• Screening of school children for detection of refractive errors including myopia and providing free spectacles to them under NPCB.

• Screening children for vision impairment under RBSK. This child health screening and early intervention service covers 30 common health conditions for early detection, free treatment and management including vision impairment, which also includes myopia;

• Training of school teachers to identify refractive errors and common eye ailments among school children;

• Training of eye surgeons in various eye specialties including pediatric ophthalmology to enhance skill level;

• Undertaking IEC activities to create awareness about preventive measures for eye diseases including myopia;

• Setting up of pediatric ophthalmology units at Government Medical Colleges and Regional Institutes of Ophthalmology.