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Title: Need to take effective steps to eradicate Hepatitis B virus in the country.

DR. MANDA JAGANNATH (NAGARKURNOOL): I rise to bring forth some facts regarding the silent and prevalent killer disease hepatitis B, which is the cause of 80 per cent of liver cancers in the world. In India, most of the 30 to 50 million infected people are unaware of the infection because symptoms are not severe. The hepatitis B virus (HBV) spreads in the same manner as HIV – through sexual contact, blood transfusion, contaminated needles and from mother to child. Sharing personal articles of an infected person could also be risky. India is most vulnerable to the disease, which several thousands of people dying every year from liver failure, mostly caused by HBV. Since untreated hepatitis B could lead to serious complications like but none for HBV. Experts feel that HBV infection is likely to remain a cause of morbidity and mortality for several decades. Unfortunately, we don't have a good public health policy to address all these vital issues. I urge the Government to club the AIDS campaign with hepatitis B and C. The initiative will have to be focused on timely education of physicians and health care providers to ensure that the disease is prevented, diagnosed and treated early. I would also request the Government to subsidize the treatment and make sure the availability and affordability of drugs then only more people can access treatment.