

Current situation and countermeasures being taken against infectious diseases in member cities

DELHI “Countermeasures on Infectious Diseases in Delhi”

Delhi is the national capital of India with estimated population of around 16.6 million spread over an area of around 1483 Sq Km. About 93% of the population residing in Delhi is urban and all areas are likely to be urbanized soon in coming years. Delhi being a hub for trade and employment for whole of Northern India, Delhi suffers from the problem of unplanned growth, slums and uncontrolled immigration. Delhi is divided in 9 districts for the purpose of administration and development.

Delhi has multiplicity of Governmental agencies working for delivery of health care services to the citizens of Delhi, most important of them being 3 local self governments viz. Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB) being functioning in their jurisdictional areas, Delhi State Government that takes care of co-ordination between these agencies besides having its own network of health facilities and hospitals and also Central Government (Government of India) Directorate of Health Services is the technical wing of Delhi Government with its network of over 182 dispensaries and 14 hospitals, which is in addition to other governmental hospitals (79 in number and around 22 thousand beds) and primary care level facilities). Delhi State Government with all necessary infrastructure – institutional, technical and Human is having the main function of Monitoring, Regulation, Co-ordination & Finance of the health care facilities, overall control of Planning, Monitoring and implementation of all health activities within State in addition to being functional in the Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Health Care, and Water Supply & Sewage Disposal. Local bodies (MCD, NDMC and DCB) are mainly responsible for public health aspects.

Weekly monitoring of situation at the highest level under the personal supervision of Hon'ble Minister of Health, Delhi Government for coordination between important local bodies i.e. MCD, NDMC and Delhi Government besides officials from other departments such as water supply, sewage disposal, urban development etc. is regularly undertaken.

At State level, Delhi is having a public Health Wing in Directorate of Health Services and Control Rooms in DHS & MCD. There are individual disease Control Programs /Monitoring Cells for Food/Water Borne (AGE/Cholera), Vector Borne (Malaria, Dengue, etc.), Tuberculosis, Leprosy, HIV/AIDS including STI, Childhood Infections (ARI, Measles, Diphtheria etc.).

Delhi has also had several outbreaks of certain infectious diseases in the past few years, most important of these being those of Dengue/DHF/DSS, Cholera, Meningococcal disease.

Because of the limited water supply in Delhi there is always a chance of having

outbreaks of water borne diseases such as Acute Diarrhoeal Diseases, Typhoid, Hepatitis (Type E) etc. especially in summer seasons when water demand far exceeds the supply. During monsoon and post monsoon season in addition the conditions become favorable for breeding of vector (mosquitoes) and Delhi is at high risk of having Dengue outbreaks and also malaria. To combat this spread of these diseases Delhi is having a Vector Borne Disease Control Programme being implemented by MCD and other local bodies.

There is a long list of infectious diseases under surveillance. For some these diseases India already have national programmes and some sort of surveillance is carried out under these programmes that is being strengthened.

Under Delhi Municipal Corporation Act some of the diseases of Epidemic Potential that require immediate Response by Public Health System are compulsorily notifiable by all agencies/doctors and these diseases AGE/Cholera, Meningococcal disease, Dengue, Chickenpox, Measles, Typhoid, Hepatitis, Malaria, Tuberculosis. Besides any disease if required may be declared as notifiable under the act..

For Water/Food Borne Diseases there are activities pertaining to surveillance/close monitoring of water quality, food hygiene surveillance, distribution of chlorine tablets/ORS and health education. For surveillance of vector borne diseases (malaria, dengue etc.) the agencies carry out vector surveillance, disease surveillance, house to house surveys for domestic breeding, source reduction, insecticide sprays/fogging activities besides early diagnosis and prompt treatment of such detected cases. For airborne diseases (ARI, tuberculosis, meningococcal) we have control programmes/campaigns that include health education, diagnosis & treatment facilities and community level intervention. HIV/AIDS is an upcoming problem for which there is national programme with all activities promoting risk free behaviours and regulatory mechanisms in place. Leprosy in Delhi is on verge of elimination.

For unforeseen/newer infectious diseases of epidemic potential or for detection of new infections such as Avian flu/SARS etc. the authorities are well geared to tackle any exigency and mechanisms exist for co-ordination between various departments and agencies to combat such exigencies.

The State has its own Health Information System, however a more integrated approach is being adopted. To fill the gap, the state is a part of 'National integrated Disease surveillance Project (NDSP)' recently launched by Government of India and Project Implementation Plan (PIP) is under preparation. The programme aims at developing infrastructure for early detection of infectious disease outbreaks and prompt response besides developing Rapid Response Team and epidemiological support at district level.

Delhi is ready to build the "Information Network System on Infectious Diseases" for exchange of information, opinions and general sharing of information under ANMC 21 project and to implement joint surveys and research in infectious diseases.