GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESEARCH

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4022
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24TH MARCH, 2023

LIFE-THREATENING BACTERIAL INFECTION

4022. DR. PON GAUTHAM SIGAMANI:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the researchers have identified a better drug treatment for severe scrub typhus, a life-threatening bacterial infection and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that agricultural labourers are at primary risk of infections due to exposure to shrubs where the ticks breed and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a multi-center clinical trial conducted by Indian researchers found that administering a combination of antibiotic drugs is more effective for treating severe scrub typhus than single-drug therapies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(DR. BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)

(a) to (d): The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), an autonomous body under Department of Health Research has intimated that historically, scrub typhus has been treated with doxycycline or chloramphenicol. In recent years, chloramphenicol has been used less frequently because of its toxicity profile, and oral azithromycin is increasingly used for mild scrub typhus. A recently conducted multicenter, double-blind, randomized, controlled trial in India concluded that combination therapy with intravenous doxycycline and azithromycin was a better therapeutic option for the treatment of severe scrub typhus than monotherapy with either drug alone.

The typical vector of Scrub typhus, Leptotrombidium mites are generally found associated with either established forest vegetation or secondary vegetation after clearance of forest areas. This species is generally abundant on grasses and herbs where bushes are scarce.

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