

Government launches 'UMMID' initiative to tackle inherited diseases

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DBT has started the UMMID Initiative which is designed on the concept of Prevention is better than Cure



The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan has launched UMMID (Unique Methods of Management and treatment of Inherited Disorders) initiative and inaugurated NIDAN (National Inherited Diseases Administration) Kendras, which is being supported by Department of Biotechnology (DBT) & Science and Technology.

Speaking on the occasion Dr Harshvardhan brought attention to the issue of ensuring proper treatment to children and creation of awareness amongst the masses and urged upon all to dwell more into finding solutions.

Congratulating DBT for supporting this path-breaking initiative, he said "With the program being implemented at government hospitals, people who cannot afford expensive care for genetic disorders will be benefited". He further emphasized on the use of cutting edge scientific technology and molecular medicine for extending Universal Health Coverage for all.

Dr. Renu Swarup, Secretary, DBT also highlighted how UMMID is a path-breaking initiative in the health-care sector. She said "UMMID initiative is meeting the hopes of large number of persons with inherited diseases".

Taking into account that congenital and hereditary genetic diseases are becoming a significant health burden in India, and realizing the need for adequate and effective genetic testing and counselling services. DBT has started the UMMID Initiative which is designed on the concept of 'Prevention is better than Cure'. In India's urban areas, congenital malformations and genetic disorders are the third most common cause of mortality in newborns.

With a very large population and high birth rate, and consanguineous marriage favored in many communities, prevalence of genetic disorders is high in India, the UMMID initiative aims (i) to establish NIDAN Kendras to provide counselling, prenatal testing and diagnosis, management, and multidisciplinary care in Government Hospitals wherein the influx of patients is more, (ii) to produce skilled clinicians in Human Genetics, and (iii) to undertake screening of pregnant women and new born babies for inherited genetic diseases in hospitals at aspirational districts.

As a part of this initiative, in the first phase, five NIDAN Kendras have been established to provide comprehensive clinical care.

Training Centres at Madras Medical Mission- Chennai; SGPGIMS- Lucknow; CDFD – Hyderabad; AIIMS- New Delhi; MAMC- New Delhi; NIIH- Mumbai and CMC Vellore have been supported to provide training in Biochemical Genetics, Cytogenetics, Molecular Genetics, and Clinical Genetics to the clinicians from government hospitals. Screening of 10,000 pregnant women and 5000 new born babies per year for inherited genetic diseases will be taken up at the following seven aspirational districts.

The department is planning to expand the program and establish more Nidan Kendras in other parts of the country, train more clinicians in clinical genetics and cover more aspirational districts for screening of pregnant women and new born babies for inherited genetic diseases to provide comprehensive clinical care, in the next phase under this UMMID initiative.