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Experts call for more immunisation coverage to prevent Japanese Encephalitis

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The vector-borne zoonotic disease is presently more focussed on symptom management



The management and treatment of Japanese Encephalitis (JE), a vector-borne zoonotic disease, are presently more focussed on symptom management and limiting adverse effects of the condition, thus underscoring the importance of immunisation as a key strategy for effective control. India's Universal Immunization Programme, under the National Health Mission, includes Japanese Encephalitis as part of its sub-national.

Dr Ramesh Sungal, Pediatrician, Apollo Hospital and Rutheek Children Care, Bangalore while giving an insight about JE said, "In Karnataka, there is low awareness of JE. Many cases go undetected in the early stages, as initial, dominant symptoms including vomiting and gastrointestinal pain are mistaken for other ailments. Annually, most of the cases we see roughly in children are during the rainy season. Severe cases are characterised by the onset of high fever, seizures, disorientation, and even coma. To avoid such complications, it is imperative to promote immunisation coverage. Vaccines are safe and effective, evidence-based options to prevent the disease. Widespread immunisation can significantly reduce the disease burden across the population."

Dr Jejoe Karankumar, Director Medical Affairs, Abbott India said, "Despite its high prevalence in endemic regions, awareness about JE is low. Plugging knowledge gaps while raising awareness about available vaccination options is crucial to scale immunisation coverage across the Indian population. In addition, ensuring healthcare practitioners are equipped with the knowledge to make evidence-based vaccine recommendations to parents and caregivers is also key. Increased vaccination coverage in childhood will ensure better protection, thus leading to prolonged and improved quality of life outcomes."