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5157 H1N1 cases so far: health ministry reviews

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The status of H1N1 influenza being reported from different states was reviewed today at a high level meeting chaired by the Secretary (Health & Family Welfare) Mr BP Sharma where in addition to the director general, health services (DGHS) Dr Jagdish Prasad, representatives of leading government hospitals such as Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, Safdurjung, AIIMS, and from Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) were also present.

It was noted that that during the period Jan 1, 2015 to February 10, 2015, the total number of H1N1 cases is 5157 and number of deaths is 407. Largely the cases are from Delhi, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Telangana whereas largely the deaths due to H1N1 are in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Telangana.

The current trends of morbidity and mortality, the diagnostic and test algorithms being followed, availability of diagnostic kits and drugs, and other preventive measures were discussed. Based on the advice given by experts it was decided that various health institutions treating H1N1 cases be advised for vaccination against H1N1 influenza for the concerned health workers in the hospitals in contact with H1N1 patients. This will be in addition to the proper personal protective measures being followed at the hospitals. Guidelines are being drafted for vaccination of healthcare workers and these will be shared with the states for dissemination to all health institutions.

The government of India has already placed an order for enhancing stock of diagnostic kits to be supplied to the lab network under Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) being used for testing H1N1 influenza. To enhance the level of preparedness, additional 60,000 Oseltamivir medicines and 10,000 N-95 masks are being procured. In addition, NCDC has floated a tender for additional 10,000 diagnostic kits. In case of need, labs under ICMR have been identified across the country to provide additional testing facilities. In order to prevent panic and inconvenience to people, and to encourage only those cases requiring H1N1 testing are actually taken up for testing, it was decided that the communication strategy should create awareness among the general public regarding this aspect.