Dengue and chikungunya hit the capital again

IMA warns of a possibly larger breakout unless immediate action is taken along with community participation

New Delhi, April 13, 2017: A recent report by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on vector-borne diseases has revealed about 79 cases of chikungunya in the national capital this year. In the last three months, 24 cases of dengue have been reported, of which 11 patients acquired the infection from one of the neighbouring states. According to the SDMC, there were 9 new cases of chikungunya this week. All these patients were from the neighbouring states. Although chikungunya and dengue cases had tapered off by the first week of December last year, this year has again brought back many such cases.

Speaking about this Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement, said, "IMA had already indicated that the cases of vector-borne diseases in the capital will be as predicted last year. Dengue and chikungunya cases in Delhi so far have been a matter of great concern. Dengue cases create panic among the public every year. We must all agree that collectively we have failed in controlling the mosquito menace and consequently, Delhi today is in the midst of an increasing number of dengue and malaria patients. This is a collective failure of Municipal Corporation, Delhi Government, Central Government, LG office, Medical Associations, CSR departments, Media, NGOs, and the Private sector. Dengue is preventable and the very first step towards this is its management. However, to make this possible, community participation is a must."

Both dengue and chikungunya are viral diseases transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes. The Aedes mosquito breeds in stagnant water anywhere inside or outside the house. Most of the symptoms associated with both diseases are the same, with some key differences. High fever is the primary symptom of dengue along with the at least two of the following: severe headache, severe eye pain, joint, muscle or bone pain, rash, mild bleeding from the nose or the gums, small spots caused by bleeding into the skin, and low white cell count. In severe cases, plasma leakage can lead to shock, hemorrhage (internal bleeding), and organ impairment. At this stage, the disease is potentially fatal.
On the other hand, chikunguniya symptoms include high fever, severe joint pain, joint swellings, muscle pain, headaches, and rashes and this disease is mostly non-fatal.

Highlighting the importance of community participation in taking action against vector-borne diseases, Dr K K Aggarwal added, "Individuals, families, and communities need to be more involved in the planning and conduct of local vector control activities. It is not possible for the government to employ enough people to search every backyard and identify and destroy breeding sites. At IMA, we are committed to raising awareness amongst the medical fraternity and the public in general about the prevention and management of vector-borne diseases."

Some do’s and dont’s for the prevention and management of these diseases are as follows.

Do’s
1) Take plenty of rest and avoid getting dehydrated if you have any of the above-mentioned symptoms.
2) Get tested immediately. In case of high-grade fever for more than 24 hours, it is a must to go and visit the doctor.
3) Use mosquito nets and cover yourself well to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.
4) Keep the surroundings clean, and dispose of waste and stagnant water regularly.

Don’ts
1) Aedes mosquitoes breed in clean water. Therefore, don’t let water stagnate anywhere in or near your home.
2) Don’t use mosquito repellents on children below two months of age. Use insect repellents containing 10% DEET on children older than two months.
3) Don’t apply mosquito repellent on your palms, or near your eyes or mouth.
4) Avoid dark-colored clothing as it attracts mosquitoes.
5) Avoid wearing tight clothes as it is easier for the mosquitoes to bite through such garments.

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About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2,60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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