

Swine Flu Alert In Rajasthan -2017

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ABSTRACT

Swine flu has claimed seven lives this year and according to experts it has spread due to favourable climatic conditions.

According to additional director (rural health) Dr Aditya Atreya seven people have died in the state including a pregnant woman. The deaths were one each from Ajmer, Nagaur, Jodhpur, Pali, Barmer, Kota and Baran districts.

GENERAL REVIEW

"The weather is suitable for the H1N1 virus to thrive as humidity has been between 28% and 36%. People who have died were elderly with weak immunity, suffering from various diseases and pregnant women," said Dr Atreya. One person had tested positive in January this year and he died, while in February six people have tested positive and two died. In March, so far 25 have tested positive and have four died, he informed (1,2).

Swine flu (H1N1 influenza virus) is a respiratory disease caused by a strain of influenza virus that usually only infects pigs. The virus can be transmitted to humans.

Dr Atreya advised that children, elderly persons and pregnant women should take special care as they are vulnerable to the virus. "If they suffer from cold and cough for more than three days, then should immediately contact a physician, who will accordingly advise further tests," he added.

IN NEWS

In 2016, 2,122 samples were taken between January and December and 197 had tested positive for swine flu, out of which 43 people had died.

Health minister Kali Charan Saraf said that there is no need to panic, as swine flu medicines are available at all government institutions in sufficient quantity. "Isolation wards are there at medical colleges and district hospitals and even at community health centres. Testing for H1N1 is available at all government institutions and is done free of cost. Testing kits are also available at the government health facilities," said Saraf.

A 40-year-old woman succumbed to the deadly swine flu virus in Kota last week with which the number of deaths in Rajasthan due to the disease has risen to 23 this year.

However, what has the state health department worried is that these cases continue to occur, despite the sweltering heat, in which the virus is believed to become dormant or less active at the

least. The department has now sent samples to the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune and hoping to find the answers (3,4).

"We do not exactly know the reason why the virus is still active in the hot climate. Last week, we have sent samples for laboratory testing to NIV, Pune. We will be able to comment once the report comes," Dr Aditya Atreya, incharge, Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) said. So far this year, 228 patients in Rajasthan have been confirmed afflicted by the virus. Of these 114 patients were tested positive in the state capital Jaipur alone.

The health department had sent a total of 810 samples for laboratory testing and found 228 confirmed H1N1 virus positive.

According to the official figures, six deaths were reported in Jaipur, three in Kota, two each in Ajmer, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Pali and Baran.

One death each was reported in Nagaur, Sikar, Jaisalmer and Barmer.

Meanwhile, in Bikaner, two more patients, including a 42-year-old male and a 23-year-old female were reported positive on Sunday.

Bikaner chief medical and health officer, Dr Devendra Chaudhary said that eight patients have been found swine flu positive this year.

H1N1 OUTBREAK

The H1N1 virus outbreak had previously occurred in India during the 2009 flu pandemic. The virus killed 981 people in 2009 and 1,763 in 2010. The mortality decreased in 2011 to 75. It claimed 405 lives in 2012 and 699 lives in 2013. In 2014, a total of 218 people died from the H1N1 flu. India recorded 837 laboratory confirmed cases in the year. [5]

Every year, there was a rise in number of cases and deaths during winter as temperature affects virus. During 2014–15 winter, there was a spurt in cases at the end of 2014. In 2015, the outbreak became widespread through India. On 12 February 2015, Rajasthan declared an epidemic (5,6)

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