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National Lymphatic Filariasis Elimination Programme

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The Department of Health and Family welfare, Government of Odisha, will organize a Mass Drug Administration (MDA) round in a phased manner for elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis in 17 endemic districts of the state. In this regards, A virtual media sensitization workshop was organized in the state by the Health department in collaboration with Global Health Strategies. The objective of this workshop was to ensure the dissemination of information highlighting the debility caused by Lymphatic Filariasis, so that people can get accurate information about this serious disease.

Through his video appeal message, Mr. Naba Kishore Das, State Health Minister, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha, appealed to the public to consume anti-filaria drugs administered during MDA program in 17 districts of the state in the presence of the drug administrator.

During the workshop, Dr. Shubhashisha Mohanty, State Program Officer, Vector Borne Diseases, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha, said, Keeping in mind India's commitment to eliminate filariasis by 2021 and acknowledging the importance of continuing important public health initiatives, the Government of Odisha Under the National Lymphatic Filariasis Elimination Program, is undertaking MDA rounds in 17 LF endemic districts in phases. The MDA rounds will be organized as per COVID-19 guidelines issued by the Government of India. The first phase of the Mass Drug Administration (MDA) program will begin from February 10 to February 19, 2021 and the second phase from February 25 till March 6, 2021. 8 districts that are undertaking MDA from 10 February include Bhadrak, Balasore, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Jharasuguda, Khurda, Nuapada and Nayagarh. The districts undertaking MDA in the second phase include Angul, Ganjam, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Kandhamal, Sonepur, Bargarh and Sambalpur.

Dr. Niranjana Mishra, Director, Public Health, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha, stated through a presentation that Filariasis is a serious public health problem which is spread by mosquito bites. Filariasis is one of the leading causes of long-term disability worldwide. However, small side-effects must not outweigh the importance of consuming the anti-filaria drugs. This discomfort is also an indicator that the programme is working.

India's National Programme for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis has a two-pillar strategy: one is mass drug Administration MDA another is morbidity management and disability prevention.

Dr. Bijoy Kumar Panigrahi, Director, Family Welfare, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha, spoke about the benefits of deworming. He said that the preventive drugs administered during MDA such as Albendazole have additional benefits like de-worming, which increases absorption of nutrients in children and helps in their physical and cognitive development

Dr. Bijay Mohapatra, Director, Health Services, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha, said, Everyone except children below 2 years, pregnant women and seriously ill people must consume the prescribed dosage during the rounds in the presence of trained health workers.

Dr. Amarendranath Mohanty, Director, State Institute of Health Family Welfare, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha, stated that media plays an important role in disseminating correct information related to public health programmes. He appealed to the media present to extend their full support in making the Mass Drug Administration (MDA) program to further make it a success.

Concluding the workshop, Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Special Secretary to Govt., Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Odisha, stated that only with the support of the community and the media, we will be able to eliminate LF completely.

During this campaign around 60,000 trained volunteers including ASHAs will be engaged as Drug Administrators in all 17 districts.

Lastly, Mr. Anuj Ghosh, Director, Global Health Strategies, thanked all participants and emphasized that with the combined efforts of all, we can eliminate the debilitating disease like Lymphatic Filariasis from the state. In this virtual workshop senior officials of Health & Family Welfare Department and State representatives of World Health Organization (WHO) and Project Concern International (PCI) were also present at this media workshop.

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