

Saving Children's Lives from Diarrhoea

BATTLING ROTAVIRUS IN INDIA



Diarrhoea prevalence varies from 1.8 to 17 across the states in India (NFHS 2015-16). The introduction of rotavirus vaccine in the national immunisation programme in India would prevent more than 25,000 deaths, nearly 3,00,000 hospitalisations and over 6,00,000 outpatients visits each year. The average hospitalisation cost due to rotavirus diarrhoea could range from INR 2,000 to INR 8,400 depending on the hospital facilities.



Introduction

Diarrhoea and Pneumonia in general account for almost one quarter of total under five child deaths globally and particularly in countries with limited access to health services, basic sanitation and hygiene and nutrition. Diarrhoea alone was responsible for around 5,26,000 child deaths globally in 2015 contributing to almost 10 per cent of under-five child mortality. In the same year, diarrhoeal deaths among under five children in India contributed to more than 22 per cent of total global diarrhoeal deaths. Approximately 321 children aged under five die every day due to diarrhoeal diseases and around 70 per cent of these deaths associated with diarrhoea occur during the first two years of a child's life¹.

Diarrhoea is caused due to wide range of pathogens including viruses like *Rotavirus*, bacterias like *E.Coli*, *Shigella*, *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* etc and protozoas. Rotavirus is considered to be a common and major cause of severe diarrhoea among young children throughout the world and accounts for around 40 per cent of diarrhoea cases admitted in hospitals. The recent National Family Health Survey (2015-16) features drastic variation in prevalence of diarrhoea

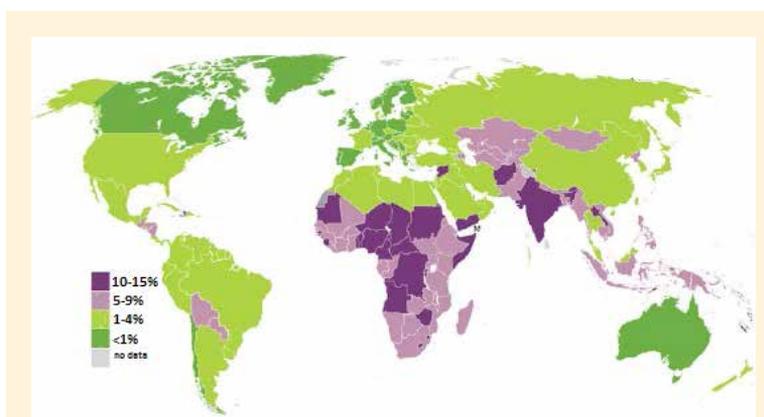


Figure 1: Percentage of deaths among children under age 5 attributable to diarrhoea, 2015 (Source: WHO and Maternal and Child Epidemiology Estimation Group (MCEE) provisional estimates 2015)

varying from 1.8 to 17 across the states in India. According to WHO estimates, more than 2 lakhs children under five die each year from vaccine preventable rotavirus infection². In India, nearly 32.7 lakhs children, due to several diarrhoeal episodes, visit hospitals as out-patients annually out of which around 9 lakhs children are admitted. Approximately, 80,000 to 1,00,000 children aged under five die due to rotavirus related diarrhoea³. The economic burden to treat rotavirus

¹One is too many: Ending child deaths from pneumonia and diarrhoea (Rep.). (2016, November). Retrieved February 18, 2017, from UNICEF website: https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_93020.html

²WHO department on Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals. (n.d.). Retrieved February 25, 2017, from <http://www.who.int/immunization/en/>

³Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. (2016, March 26). Achieving a new milestone towards expanding full immunization coverage in the country to reduce child mortality [Press release]. Retrieved February 11, 2017, from <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=138342>

