



drishti

## Under-Reporting of Diseases due to Pandemic

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### Why in News

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According to information on weekly outbreaks available on the website of the **Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)**, there have been **unusually fewer instances of diseases other than Covid-19** due to the ongoing novel coronavirus pandemic.

The IDSP issues **weekly reports on disease outbreaks** across the country based on its **surveillance network** that spans at least 600 districts.

### Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme

- The Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) portal is a one stop portal which has facilities for data entry, view reports, outbreak reporting, data analysis, training modules and resources related to disease surveillance.
- It was launched by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, in assistance with the **World Bank**, in **2004**.

### Key Points

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- **Current Scenario:**
  - The latest weekly report available on the IDSP website from **Week 12 (March 16-22)** of 2020 records a **mere 6 disease alerts** across the country.
    - An alert is when a **sizable number of cases from a region** are reported.
    - The six alerts include a case of **Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever**, three cases of **chickenpox** and a case **each of dengue and food poisoning**.
  - In Week 11 of 2020, there were **28 alerts**, 12 of which were for Covid-19.
  - However, **after 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020, there is again an increase in reports of other diseases** but the latest data suggests that it **hasn't completely normalised** as compared to previous years,
- **Past Scenario:**
  - In the same week in **2019**, there were **17 alerts**; in **2018**, there were **28**; and in **2017**, there were **45**.
  - However there are **no records** in 2020 after week 12, that is after March 22.
- **Reasons for Under-Reporting:**
  - **Lockdown and the behavioural change** due to Covid-19..
  - Presence of **only testing and treatment for Covid-19** available at government healthcare facilities.
  - IDSP faces a **manpower crunch** in the middle of a pandemic.

## Way Forward

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- The neglect of other diseases has been observed by a **reduction in the notifications of fresh tuberculosis infections** and a **general decline in claims under the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme**.
- It's debatable how useful this would be to improve Covid-19 surveillance, but it is essential in improving overall surveillance as well as providing timely updates about present infections. The pandemic needs serious focus, but **India cannot afford to ignore other diseases and infections**.

**Source:TH**