



First-Ever List of Fungal Infections

For Prelims: Fungal Infection, Fungal Priority Pathogen List, World Health Organization

For Mains: Concerns regarding Fungal Pathogen, Fungal Priority Pathogen List

Why in News?

Recently, The [World Health Organisation](#) released the first-ever **list of fungal infections (Priority Pathogens) that can be a threat to public health.**

What is WHO's Fungal Priority Pathogen List?

- **About FPPL:**
 - **Fungal priority pathogens list (FPPL) includes 19 fungi that represent the greatest threat to human health.**
 - The list takes precedence from the **bacterial priority pathogens list**, first established by **WHO in 2017** with a similar focus to galvanise global attention and action.
- **Aim:**
 - It aims to **focus and drive further research and policy interventions** to strengthen the global response to fungal infections and antifungal resistance.
- **Categories:**
 - The classification is based on the **pathogen's public health impact or emerging antifungal resistance risk.**
 - **Critical Priority Group:** It includes *Candida auris*, which is a highly drug-resistant fungi, *Cryptococcus neoformans*, *Aspergillus fumigatus*, and *Candida albicans*.
 - **High Priority Group:** It includes a number of other fungi from the *Candida* family as well as others such as *Mucorales*, a group containing "**black fungus**", an infection which rose rapidly in seriously ill people, particularly in India, during Covid-19.
 - **Medium Priority Group:** It includes a number of other fungi, including *Coccidioides* spp and *Cryptococcus gattii*.
- **Recommended Actions by FPPL Report:**
 - Strengthening laboratory capacity and surveillance.
 - Sustaining investments in research, development, and innovation.
 - Enhancing public health interventions for prevention and control.

What are the Rising Concerns related to Fungal Pathogens?

- **Concerns:**
 - Fungal pathogens are a major threat to public health and are becoming increasingly common and **resistant to treatment** with only **four classes of antifungal medicines currently available**, and few candidates in the clinical pipeline.
 - Most fungal pathogens **lack rapid and sensitive diagnostics** and those that exist are not **widely available or affordable globally.**

- Emerging evidence indicates that the incidence and geographic range of fungal diseases are both expanding worldwide due to global warming and the increase of international travel and trade.
- During the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), the reported incidence of **invasive fungal infections increased significantly** among hospitalized patients.
- As the fungi that cause common infections (**such as candida oral and vaginal thrush**) become increasingly **resistant to treatment**, risks for the **development of more invasive forms of infections** in the general population are also growing.
- **Target Population:**
 - These fungal infections often affect **severely ill patients** and those with significant **underlying immune system** related conditions.
 - Populations at greatest risk of invasive fungal infections include those with [cancer](#), [HIV/AIDS](#), **organ transplants, chronic respiratory disease, and post-primary tuberculosis infection.**

[Source: IT](#)

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