



Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis

Why in News?

Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE) remains a serious **health concern** due to low **coverage of [measles](#) vaccination** in Uttar Pradesh .

Key Points

- **About SSPE:**
 - It is a **progressive and fatal brain disorder** associated with [measles \(rubella\) infection](#).
 - It can develop **many years after** infection , even if a person has fully recovered from measles.
 - This disease is mainly found in **children and adolescents and** is more commonly seen in **men than women** .
 - Although cases of SSPE have been reported worldwide, it is considered **a rare disease in Western countries** .
- **Reason:**
 - Usually, **the measles virus does not affect the brain** .
 - But **SSPE can develop** because of **an abnormal immune response** or **certain forms of the virus** .
 - In this condition, **inflammation occurs in the brain** , which **can persist for many years** .
 - **The abnormal immune response to the measles virus** can cause serious complications and **death** .
- **Symptoms:**
 - **Early symptoms** of **SSPE** may include declined **school performance** , **forgetfulness**, **anger issues**, **distractibility** , **insomnia** , and **hallucinations** .
 - **Sudden jerks in the hands, head or body muscles** may also be experienced.
 - As the disease progresses, **seizures** and **abnormal, uncontrolled muscle movements** may occur.
 - **In the next stage** of the disease , **the muscles start to become stiff** .
 - **Swallowing food may become difficult** . Additionally, in some cases **the patient's vision may also be affected** .
 - **In the final stage** , the **body temperature may rise** and **blood pressure and pulse may become abnormal** .
- **Treatment:**
 - **There is no specific treatment available for SSPE.** The disease has **a high mortality rate** .
 - **Antiviral medications** and **immune system-strengthening medications** may be given to control symptoms .

Measles

- **About:**
 - The measles virus is a [ribonucleic acid virus](#) belonging to **the Morbillivirus genus**.

- Measles is a **highly contagious disease**, and an infected person often transmits the virus to more than 90% of their unprotected close contacts.
- The virus **first infects the respiratory tract**, then spreads throughout the body. Measles is a human disease and **does not occur in animals**.
- Measles is **completely preventable through a two-dose vaccine** and has been officially eliminated in many countries with advanced health care systems .

▪ **Treatment:**

- There is **no specific antiviral treatment** for the measles virus .
- Serious complications from food poisoning can be avoided through medical care that ensures good nutrition, adequate fluid intake, and treatment of dehydration.

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