Brucellosis

Why in News?

An 8-year-old girl from Kottakkal in Malappuram district of Kerala died at the Government Medical College Hospital, Kozhikode, recently after undergoing around two months of treatment for brucellosis.

- It is a bacterial infection caused by the consumption of ***unpasteurized milk.***
- **Caused by -** Various Brucella species.
- It is also known as undulant fever, Mediterranean fever, Malta fever
- It mainly infects cattle, swine, goats, sheep and dogs.
- **Transmission -** Humans acquire it through direct contact with infected animals, by eating or drinking contaminated animal products or by inhaling airborne agents.
- Most cases are caused by ingesting unpasteurized milk or cheese from infected goats or sheep. Human-to-human transmission is ***very rare.***
- **Symptoms -** Fever, weakness, weight loss, and general a feeling of discomfort. In many patients, they can be mild and may not get diagnosed at all.
- **Incubation Period -** It can vary from one week to two months, but it usually lasts between two and four weeks.
- **Vulnerable age group -** It affects people of all ages. Transmission primarily affects farmers, butchers, hunters, veterinarians and laboratory personnel.
- **Treatment -** Treatment options include taking doxycycline 100 mg tablets twice a day for 45 days, and streptomycin 1 g daily for 15 days as per the advice of the doctors.
- **Prevention -** Vaccination of cattle, goats and sheep is among the prevention options.
- Pasteurisation of milk for direct consumption and for creating derivatives such as cheese is an important step to prevent its transmission from animals to humans.

Reference

The Hindu | What is brucellosis?