

Leptospirosis

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Health

Why in news?

Recently, Jamaica had reports deadly leptospirosis outbreak after Hurricane Melissa.

- **Leptospirosis** - It is a **zoonotic disease**, caused by the bacteria *Leptospira*.
- It is one of the **neglected tropical disease**.
- **Geography** - Common in **tropical/warm climates** with heavy rainfall (South/Southeast Asia, Oceania, Caribbean, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa).
- **Transmission** - It spread through water or soil contaminated by the urine of infected animals, such as rodents.
 - The infection can enter the human body through cuts in the skin or through the eyes, nose and mouth.
- **Symptoms** - While initial symptoms such as fever, headache and muscle aches, can progress to a severe and potentially fatal form affecting the kidneys, liver, and brain, etc.
- **High risk groups** - Anyone coming into contact with floodwaters could be at risk, including agricultural workers, urban poor, persons engaged in cleanup activities, and flood-affected populations.
- **Diagnosis** - Blood or urine tests, may use a chest X-ray, CT scan or other imaging.
- **Treatment** - Moderate forms can use **antibiotics** may be recommended like Doxycycline, amoxicillin, ampicillin, penicillin-G, etc.
 - For severe cases, Hospitalization, IV antibiotics, mechanical ventilation (if lungs affected), plasmapheresis (to reduce organ damage).
- **Prevention** -
 - Avoid swimming/wading in floodwaters or contaminated lakes/rivers.
 - Wear protective clothing/shoes when working with animals or contaminated environments.
 - Drink only treated/boiled water.
 - Cover open wounds with waterproof dressings.
 - Use gloves when handling dead animals.
- **Annual impact** - More than 1 million infections worldwide, causing about 60,000 deaths each year.
- As per National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in India, it is **endemic in coastal & flood-prone states** (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra).

References

1. [The Hindu | Jamaica reports deadly leptospirosis outbreak](#)
2. [Cleveland clinic | Leptospirosis](#)
3. [NCDC | Leptospirosis](#)

