

## 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 <u>endemic in coastal</u>
  <u>& flood-prone states</u> (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra).

## References

- 1. The Hindu | Jamaica reports deadly leptospirosis outbreak
- 2. <u>Cleveland clinic | Leptospirosis</u>
- 3. NCDC | Leptospirosis

