New Research on Treatment for Vitiligo

Why in News?

A recent research's pre-clinical trial in mice has shown that a natural compound derived from gut-friendly bacteria significantly slows down the progression of vitiligo and may restore pigmentation.

- **Recent Findings -** A microbial product administered weekly to vitiligo-prone mice over an 18-week period.
- By the end, pigment loss on the mice's backs was reduced by **74%.**
- The product reduced killer T cells that attack the skin's pigment and increased protective regulatory T cells, which are typically scarce in vitiligo patients.
- This simple microbial compound could work as a standalone therapy or in synergy with existing treatments.
- **Vitiligo -** Vitiligo is a chronic autoimmune disorder that causes white patches to appear on the skin.
- **Symptoms -** The body's defense system begins to attack the pigment-producing cells and causes de-pigmented white patches on the skin.
- It can also affect hair, eyes, and the inside of the mouth.
- It is linked to other health challenges, including for some persons, higher risks of cardiovascular disease, psychological distress, and endocrine disorders.
- **Causes -** A lack of pigment in your skin (melanin) causes vitiligo. Studies indicate that about 30% of vitiligo cases are genetic
- **Risk age groups -** Vitiligo affects all races and sexes equally.
- There are typically two peaks in persons with vitiligo in adolescence, and then, again, during the 40s and 50s.
- It has been found to be more severe in people with darker skin tones, as found in the Indian population.
- Naturally, the visibility of the discoloration in people with darker skin can also amplify stigma and emotional distress.
- **Prevalence** - It is estimated that vitiligo affects ***0.5% to 2% of the global population.***
- The prevalence of vitiligo in India has been invariably reported to be between ***0.25% and 4%*** of dermatology outpatients and up to 8.8% in Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- Vitiligo is ***not life-threatening or contagious***.
- **Treatment -** There ***isn't a specific medication*** to stop vitiligo from affecting your skin but there are certain drugs that can slow the speed of pigmentation loss.

Reference

The Hindu | Vitiligo



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