Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis (SSPE)

Why in News?

Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis (SSPE) remains a serious health concern in Lucknow and Uttar Pradesh due to low measles vaccination coverage.

- SSPE was a progressive and ***fatal brain disorder*** that appears years after a person contracts measles.
- **Causes**
  - Normally, the measles virus does not cause brain damage. However, an abnormal immune response to measles or, possibly, certain variant forms of the virus may cause severe illness and death.
  - This response leads to brain inflammation (swelling and irritation) that may last for years.
- **Symptoms**
  - Cognitive decline, leading to difficulty and understanding, behavioral changes, such as increased irritability and personal shifts;
  - Seizures and muscle jerks resembling epilepsy;
  - Motor impairment affecting coordination and walking and gradual loss of SSPE, though some treatments can slow its progression.
- **Diagnosis**-Diagnosis involves a combination of clinical evaluation, electroencephalography (EEG), imaging studies (CT or MRI), cerebrospinal fluid examination, and measles serologic testing.
- A brain biopsy may be indicated when CSF serology is negative or equivocal.
- **High-risk groups -** Males are more often affected than females. The disease generally occurs in children and adolescents.
- **Prevention –** Timely measles vaccination.
- **Treatment –** There is ***no permanent*** cure for SSPE. Treatment focuses on managing symptoms and slowing the progression of the disease.
- **Prevalence** - SSPE has been reported in all parts of the world, but in western countries it is a *rare disease*. Very few cases are seen in the United States.

Government Initiatives to eliminate Measles
• **Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI)** - India is conducting rounds of IMI 5.0, focusing on identifying and vaccinating all unvaccinated and under-vaccinated children up to five years of age. • Measles & Rubella (MR) vaccine is part of Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)

References

1. Times of India - Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis (SSPE)
2. Medlineplus - Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis



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