



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Per.uthalsivar Kamarajar"

Kala Azar

Published On: 07-01-2023

Why is in news? PM expresses happiness on declining cases of Kala Azar disease

Kala-azar or Visceral Leishmaniasis is a **protozoan parasitic** disease, **spread by sandfly bites**.

The flies are infected with the parasite called '**leishmania donovani**'. It is also known as **Black fever**.

The parasite migrates to the internal organs such as the liver, spleen (hence "visceral"), and bone marrow, and, if left untreated, will almost always result in the death of the host.

Signs and symptoms include fever, weight loss, fatigue, anaemia, and substantial swelling of the liver and spleen. Of particular concern, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), is the emerging problem of HIV/VL co-infection.

VL is the **second-largest parasitic killer** in the world (after malaria), responsible for an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 deaths each year worldwide.

Anti-leishmanial medicines are available for treatment. Vector control is also recommended by the WHO, which means reducing or interrupting the transmission of disease by decreasing the number of **sand flies** in surroundings through insecticide spray, use of insecticide-treated nets, etc.

The Government of India aimed to eliminate the disease in India by 2015, but that deadline was missed. However, the number of cases has been brought down significantly through the **National Kala-Azar Elimination Programme**.

Under this programme, medicines, insecticides and technical support were given by the central government, while state governments provided for costs involved in implementation. The program was implemented through **State/District Malaria Control Offices and the primary health care system**.

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