

CENTRE INITIATES PROBE INTO TYPE-2 POLIO VIRUS CONTAMINATION

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The Union Health Ministry has ordered an inquiry into the type-2 polio virus contamination detected in the vials used for immunisation in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telangana, and has ordered additional immunisation in three States.

The government, which has stepped-up surveillance after the breach, has said, "That all possible precautions have been put in place to ensure that polio doesn't resurface."

The last case due to type-2 wild poliovirus globally was reported from Aligarh in India in 1999.

India was declared polio free in 2014 and the last case was reported on 13 January 2011, when Rukhsar from Howrah was infected with type-1 polio virus.

P2 vaccine strain in sewage sample

India eliminated the type-2 strain in 2016, and the type-2 containing poliovirus vaccine (ToPV) was phased out in April 2016. Children born after April 2016 in India have no immunity to type-2 polio virus.

There are three serotypes of poliovirus, each of which causes poliomyelitis. The vaccine used by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the global eradication effort is a trivalent preparation comprising all three serotypes.

Traces of polio type-2 virus were found in some batches of oral polio vaccine (OPV) manufactured by a Ghaziabad-based pharmaceutical company, even as the firm's Managing Director (MD) was arrested this past week.

The MD of Biomed Private Limited, which was supplying polio vaccines for only government-run immunisation programmes, was arrested after the Central Drug Regulator filed an FIR in the case. Four of its Directors are absconding and the Drugs Controller General has issued it a showcause notice, asking it to stop manufacturing the vaccine.

Biomed Ltd. didn't reply to queries from The Hindu.

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