

Nipah Spreads Elsewhere

Monday, 14 February 2011

New cases of Nipah infection have been detected in more northern districts apart from Lalmonirhat, where it killed 17 so far.

The results of lab tests at the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) confirmed five new infections in five districts – Kurigram, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur – on Monday.

There has been no report of any fresh case since Feb 5 at Hatiabandha, jolted by Nipah scare. However, experts cannot rule out person-to-person transmission as the incubation period is not over.

New cases of Nipah infection have been detected in more northern districts apart from Lalmonirhat, where it killed 17 so far.

The results of lab tests at the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) confirmed five new infections in five districts – Kurigram, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur – on Monday.

There has been no report of any fresh case since Feb 5 at Hatiabandha, jolted by Nipah scare. However, experts cannot rule out person-to-person transmission as the incubation period is not over.

The IEDCR urged people not to be worried about the fresh infections in other parts of the region as these cases were sporadic, not in 'cluster'.

"It's not a matter of concern as we are getting scattered (single) cases," senior scientist Dr M Mushtuq Husain said on Monday, adding "if it infects another person within a 15-minute walking distance, then it would be a matter of concern."

"Usually, we find the presence of Nipah virus every year in Rangpur region," he told bdnews24.com.

Referring to the success of the IEDCR and ICDDR,B joint efforts in containing the virus at Hatiabandha, he suggested launching a strong campaign in other parts of the region.

"We saw a tremendous success at Hatiabandha. We visited every household, met people in marketplaces, distributed leaflets, screened video messages and finally got response from the people."

"People stopped drinking raw date sap and bird-bitten fruits putting an end to new cases of infection."

But, he said, their monitoring on relatives of the infected people will continue at Hatibandha until Feb 27 (last date of the incubation period) to prevent the person-to-person transmission.

"The virus can incubate for up to 21 days after the initial infection. Usually, it incubates eight to 11 days," Husain said.

Bats that carry Nipah pass the virus into sap through saliva and droppings. People get the virus while drinking raw sap.

It appears with symptoms of fever, altered mental status and seizure.

Since its first outbreak in 2001 in Meherpur, the virus has so far killed 130 people out of 176 affected, including the recent deaths.

The highly fatal virus is being reported every year from Meherpur, Naogaon, Rajbari, Faridpur, Tangail, Thakurgaon, Kushtia, Manikganj, and Rangpur in between December and April, when people collect sap from date tree.

The Hatibandha outbreak was first reported on January 31. IEDCR lab reports confirmed it Nipah on February 4.

The IEDCR suggests those who take care of patients to wash their hands with soap and use mask to protect themselves.

Source: bdnews24.com