

## Health minister: govt will push indigenous research

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### Health minister: govt will push indigenous research efforts



Speaking at the 11th International Rotavirus Symposium on September 03, Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union health minister stated that Rotavirus is the primary cause of moderate to severe diarrhoea morbidity and mortality for children less than five years of age in India. "By including it under UIP along with Japanese Encephalitis, Rubella, and Polio, the Narendra Modi government has sent a sharp signal of its commitment to the aam admi," he mentioned.

"Earlier Rotavirus vaccines were expensive and beyond the reach of ordinary Indians. We are losing 52 children per 1000 live births every year. On top of that Rotavirus Diarrhoea snatches at least 1 lakh. This government did not lose time in introducing the vaccine in UIP. The plan of action on its deployment has also been put in place," he said in the presence of Mr Roger Glass, director of Fogarty International Center, United States, Dr Mathuram Santosham, ROTA Council, John Hopkins University, Dr K Vijay Raghavan, secretary, Department of Biotechnology, and Mr Lov Verma, union health secretary.

The Rotavirus vaccine will be introduced starting 2015, as an additional dose along with the first, second, and third doses of DPT in the UIP. There is a proposal to establish an expert committee to assess the progress in few states and union territories on the basis of the disease burden and vaccine availability.

Dr Vardhan stated further, "Meeting the Millennium Development Goals is not an end in itself. After assuming office, our government has launched a systematic study to make the public health care system user-friendly and accountable. Doctors have been told to work ahead of the deadline for meeting infant and maternal mortality targets."

Lauding the efforts of the scientific community, Dr Harsh Vardhan said indigenous research will be given a big fillip under the new government. "The government of Narendra Modi does not take decisions arbitrarily or on the basis of populism, but relies only on evidence. Anything that is decided by the scientific community as good for the protection of the lives of mothers and children will be dovetailed into the public health policy," he stated.