

Kala-azar

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Why in news?

Study warns Kala azar patients can infect others even after treatment and can be a source of infection for others in their community.

What is this disease?

- **Visceral leishmaniasis** is the most severe form of leishmaniasis, and without proper diagnosis and treatment is associated with high fatality.
- It is known by several names **kala-azar, black fever and Dumdum fever.**
- Caused by **protozoan Leishmania**, it first affects the liver, spleen and bone marrow and then migrate to inner organs.
- Fever, lack of weight, tiredness, anaemia and hepatitis and spleen swelling, skin thickness, fatigue etc.. are the signs and symptoms.
- The parasite is **transmitted to humans by the bite of female sand flies.**
- It has been **endemic to four states in India – Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh.**
- In 2014, the government launched the **Kala Azar Elimination Programme** with support from international agencies which focuses on the four endemic states and has been on the verge of eliminating the disease.