

World Sickle cell day

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In news

World Sickle cell day is observed on 19th July every year.

About World Sickle cell day

- The day came to existence in 2008 after the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) acknowledged sickle cell disease as a public health problem.
- The UNGA also recognised Sickle disease as one of the first genetic diseases.
- World Sickle Cell Day aims to raise awareness of sickle cell disorders

About Sickle Cell disease/disorder

- Sickle cell disease is the most prevalent inherited blood disorder
- People with sickle cell disorders don't have enough healthy red blood cells to carry oxygen throughout the body.
- This disease makes normal life difficult and patients need regular blood transfusions.
- The disease can be detected during the screening process of a newborn.
- If there is a family history of the Sickle Cell disease, then it can also be diagnosed at the time of pregnancy.

Types of sickle cell disease

- **Hbs beta thalassemia:** This type occurs **when the sickle cell gene is passed from one parent**, while the beta-thalassemia is passed from the other one.
- **HbSS:** It is a **severe type** of sickle cell disease which **occurs when the child inherits sickle cell gene** from both the parents.

- **HbSc:** This occurs when one parent has a sickle cell gene and the other has a gene from abnormal haemoglobin.

Symptoms of sickle cell disorder

- The symptoms of the disease generally appear at the age of five months and tend to change over time. Even though the symptoms vary from person to person and can change from time to time.
- Some of the common symptoms of Sickle Cell Disease include Anaemia, Swelling in hands and feet, eyesight problems, pain, delay in growth and regular infections.

Treatment

The only cure of this disease is either stem cell transplant or bone marrow. If it is recognised at an early stage, then timely treatment can help with dealing with the symptoms. Apart from stem cell transplant, the symptoms can also be dealt with the help of antibiotics, pain killers, periodic blood transfusion, and vaccinations.

Initiatives of India:

National Sickle Cell Conclave

- 'National Sickle Cell Conclave' was organized to mark World Sickle Cell Day.
- It was organized by FICCI, jointly with Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Apollo Hospitals and Novartis
- During the webinar The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) – Novartis report 'Stepping out of the shadows – Combating Sickle Cell Disease in India' was also released.

Efforts of Government of India

- **Portal:** In order to collect real time data and provide relevant information related to Sickle Cell, the government has launched a new portal which will act as a

catalyst in creating awareness.

- **Action Research project:** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has initiated an 'Action Research' project under which Yoga dependent lifestyle should be promoted and to reduce the complications in the patient suffering from this disease.