

Indian national snakebite protocol - 2007

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Snake bite envenomation is more in the developing countries and poor communities, and morbidity and mortality were high in India. It causes economical burden in many ways. Health care professionals dealing snakebites are perplexed with different methods described in the identification of snakebites and for management.

This has resulted in chain of events such as over and under use of ASV, thus putting the patients in low or high risk to develop complications, financial burden, non availability of ASV and directions for more production of ASV. In addition, people living in a pluralistic socio cultural follow various discarded methods and lack knowledge on first aid. Hence, the treating doctors, other health workers, Traditional Medical practitioners and the community need orientation on snakebite management. In view of that, there is a need to develop a National Protocol for snakebite for India which should be based on scientific grounds, uniform and easy to practice at all health centers. Keeping these in mind, a protocol for snakebite management was developed under TamilNadu Snakebite Task Force. Later it was discussed with professionals and officials in Health Department of different states. Among them TamilNadu, Andhrapradesh, Madhyapradesh, Rajasthan and WestBengal have adopted already. On August 2nd 2007, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Department (MOH&FW), Government of India called for a meeting to discuss the protocol along with scientists, clinicians, practitioners, faculty members and officials. After a dedicated discussion, the protocol was approved by the MOH&FW.

The current protocol provides the details on first aid schedule, recommended methods (Do it R.I.G.H.T.), discarded methods (viz., tourniquet, cutting, cryotherapy, etc.), diagnostic principles, investigations, treatment modalities, administration of ASV, identification and prevention of reactions to ASV, surgical intervention, recovery plan, repeat doses of ASV, managing life threatening complications, requirements for Health centre and training and preventive aspects.

As the benefits of National Protocol has been encouraging, it has been proposed to have training on the new protocol and disseminate the knowledge across the country. At this juncture, we are proud to inform that Hon'ble Union Health Minister Dr.Anbumani Ramadoss has taken initiatives to bring this into reality.