

Bihar Government declares black fungus infection an epidemic

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The Bihar government on Saturday declared black fungus or mucormycosis as an epidemic disease under section 2 of the Epidemic Disease Act 1897.

The decision was taken by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

"Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced black fungus as an epidemic," the CM's office said in a tweet.

Earlier the infection was termed a notifiable disease in the state.

"Following instructions from chief minister Nitish Kumar, Black Fungus has been made a notifiable disease under the Epidemic Disease Act. Government and private hospitals will have to inform the health department through a civil surgeon. Patients will get free medicine," said Mangal Pandey.

Total cases in the country

The central government said on Saturday that there are 8,848 cases of black fungus across the country.

Based on this, the government has allocated 23,680 additional vials of Amphotericin-B to various states and union territories (UTs).

States like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Telangana have been allotted 75% of the vials.

The Union health ministry had earlier written to states advising them to review their preparedness for infection prevention and control, as well as hygiene and sanitation in hospitals.

Mucormycosis, also known as black fungus, damages the nose, eyes, sinuses, and sometimes even the brain.

It is a very rare infection that is caused by exposure to mucor mould which is commonly found in soil, plants, manure, and decaying fruits and vegetables. It affects the sinuses, the brain and the lungs and can be life-threatening in diabetic or severely immunocompromised individuals such as cancer patients or people with HIV/AIDS.

The doctors in India are documenting an alarming number of cases of mucormycosis among patients with Covid-19 and those who have recently recovered. They believe that mucormycosis may be triggered by the use of steroids, a life-saving treatment for severe and critically ill Covid-19 patients.