



■ Patients at the dengue and chikungunya ward in a Delhi government hospital. SAUMYA KHANDELWAL/HT FILE PHOTO

Audit finds health institutions failed to report dengue cases

Anonna Dutt

anonna.dutt@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Only 30% health institutions in Delhi reported their dengue positive cases to the state surveillance unit, defeating the objective of “any meaningful surveillance”, found an audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). Only 289 of the 967 hospitals and nursing homes reported dengue data.

“We need to understand not all the centres would be treating dengue patients, so they cannot report. But, definitely the reporting is less. This creates an epidemiological hindrance as experts are not able to estimate the actual disease burden,” said Dr Neena Valecha, director of the National Institute of Malaria Research.

Delhi witnessed its worst ever dengue outbreak in 2015, with about 16,000 cases and 60 deaths reported officially. The city had a chikungunya outbreak in 2016, with 9,661 confirmed cases and no deaths reported officially till December 10.

The CAG report found that of the 67,578 positive dengue cases reported by hospitals between January 2013 and December 2015, only 22,436 were reported by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, the nodal agency. Of the 409 dengue deaths reported by hospitals during the 2015 outbreak, only 60 were confirmed by the death review panel.

“We have been saying that there needs to be honest and

quick reporting and early disease surveillance and warning,” said Dr SM Raheja, in-charge of Delhi’s dengue control cell.

As per the report, the municipal corporations and the NDMC had neither developed a standard operating procedure nor any laboratory facility for surveillance.

To check breeding in homes, the MCDs employed 3,358 unskilled people for ₹109.43 crore. But, they neither supervised nor monitored the work.

The CAG also found that the MCDs and the NDMC spent ₹95.10 lakh for routine outdoor fogging, which is recommended only for emergency situations.

The corporations spent ₹37.26 crore on insecticides used in flowing drains which is “not envisaged in the guideline”, CAG said. There was no record of usage of insecticides worth ₹79.76 lakh.

Seventy-four per cent funds — ₹1.80 crore — allocated to anti-mosquito operations to the Delhi Cantonment Board could not be used, the report read.

Between 2013 and 2015, the Delhi government spent ₹10.04 crore on awareness campaigns, but the ads were released between September and November, meaning after the outbreak of dengue. It defeated the purpose of creating awareness.

Also, 67% of malaria circles, the units from where the field operations are carried out, did not have water connection, 22% did not have electricity and 88% lacked telephone connection.

4