

## Experts lay focus on public-private partnership to tackle thalassemia burden

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**A discussion on the latest research and innovative therapies aimed at revolutionising the management of Thalassemia**

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Indraprastha Apollo Hospital and Thalassemics India joined hands to commemorate International Thalassemia Day with a symposium titled "Transforming Care and Cure for Thalassemia by Leveraging Genomics and Bone Marrow Transplant."

The symposium saw a diverse group of medical professionals, including renowned bone marrow transplant specialists, pediatricians, hematologists, geneticists, and policymakers, shedding light on the latest research and innovative therapies aimed at revolutionizing the management of Thalassemia.

Discussions centered around advancements in treatment, bone marrow transplants as the definitive cure, and emerging genomic technologies that can significantly improve outcomes for patients with this challenging condition.

Approximately 10,000 children are born with Thalassemia each year, a genetic disorder impairing the body's ability to produce enough red blood cells.

The only curative option available is a Bone Marrow Transplant. "But currently, only about 500 children undergo bone marrow transplants for Thalassemia, despite 10,000 new cases every year. The clinical outcomes of BMT have shown significant improvement over the years, and even with half-matched or unmatched transplants, success rates of 80-90 percent are possible being achieved," said Dr Gaurav

Kharya, Director, Department of Bone Marrow Transplant and Cellular Therapies at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital.

Dr Vinita Shrivastava, Advisor, Health, Ministry of Tribal Affairs stated that public-private partnership is one of the best ways forward to fight thalassemia.

Shobha Tuli, Secretary of Thalassemics India, called on the government to mandate Thalassemia screening and launch a prevention program on a mission mode.

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, and Ministry of Coal have been supporting these efforts since 2017 through the Thalassemia Bal Sewa Yojana (TBSY), which helps underprivileged families meet the costs of bone marrow transplants.

Dr Harsh Mangla, Director of National Health Mission -1 at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, highlighted the need for expansion, "There is an urgent need to empanel more hospitals under the TBSY to ensure broader access to this life-saving treatment."