

Say No to Pneumonia' campaign to be launched in India

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Bangalore: On the occasion of World Pneumonia Day on November 12, the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) will be initiating the 'Say No to pneumonia' campaign in order to increase awareness about the disease and its preventive measures. The campaign aims to strengthen efforts in order to decrease infant child mortality rate due to pneumonia.

Dr R Kishore Kumar, consultant neonatal paediatrician and CEO, Cloudnine Hospital, Bangalore, and an IAP Member, said that, "Through parental education of preventable diseases and infection, we have achieved 99.83 percent survival of babies in our hospital, which is one of the best in the world. This initiative by IAP is in the right direction to achieve similar goals."

Dr Rohit C Agrawal, National IAP president, said that, "Globally, pneumonia kills an estimated 1.4 million children under the age of five years every year, which is more than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. It is alarming that India accounts

for almost 25 percent of the world's pneumonia child deaths. Creating a clean environment, addressing the issue of malnutrition, breast feeding for the first 6 months of life, timely immunization and appropriate healthcare delivery for children in India will significantly reduce mortality rates due to vaccine preventable diseases like pneumonia."

Pneumonia can be an economic burden for the families and vaccination is therefore a safe and cost-effective preventive measure. The WHO has identified the inclusion of Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) in the national immunization programs as a priority in countries, where the mortality rate of children under five years is more than 50 per 1,000 live births, or where more than 50,000 children die annually. India is an ideal candidate for the inclusion of PCV in the national immunization program.

Dr Agrawal further added that, "While Government of India is working towards introducing favorable solutions to reduce the disease burden, it is important for pediatricians, pulmonologists, and the public to join this drive against childhood pneumonia and take appropriate action to save young lives. Vaccination is the best preventive measure for vaccine preventable diseases like measles, H. influenzae and pneumococcal diseases."