

## Hepatitis B infections soar in Tibet

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**Singapore:** In a latest news report, Dr Lhamo Sharpa, a Nepal based Tibetan doctor has sounded a warning about the increased rate of Hepatitis B infections in Tibet.

Dr Sharpa has pointed out that 62 percent of Tibetans living in Nepal are infected with the virus that harms the liver and can cause serious long term health problems in some people. She has blamed the lack of education and vaccinations for the soaring number of infections.

She explained that since her domain of works revolves directly around the work with researchers in Tibetan areas of China,

she realized that rural Tibetans are especially vulnerable because of a lack of access to proper vaccinations.

She illustrated a study that she conducted with her colleagues. The study concluded that atleast 64 percent of women in rural Tibet give birth at home. Further pointing out that they are not told about vaccines available for their babies.

She was quoted in reports as saying, "Those who give birth at home don't go to hospitals unless they are sick. They don't go to hospital because they are not aware of the vaccines and that is a problem."

Hepatitis B is usually transmitted from infected people through blood or body fluids. She said that many monks get Hepatitis B through sharing razors or going to hair salons that do not sterilize their equipment.

With recent controversy surrounding the Hepatitis B vaccines produced in China, more questions regarding the safety of people in Tibet are being raised.

Late last year, at least eight babies died in China after receiving the Hepatitis B vaccine. The deaths sparked an investigation of the companies that produce the vaccine.