Managing Child with Seizures: AIIMS Nagpur Launches Tele-ESSI App for Epilepsy Awareness and Management

Nagpur, July 29 —
Epilepsy affects an estimated 5 million children in India; however, there is a huge epilepsy diagnostic and treatment gap. Nearly 70% of children with epilepsy are not properly diagnosed or treated. Half of the children with epilepsy either quit schooling or remain absent. Despite being a treatable condition, unfortunately, epilepsy either remains undiagnosed or mismanaged. There are high chances of getting a seizure in school, as children spend most of their time in school. Many teachers are unfamiliar with seizure first aid and unaware of how to respond appropriately. This leads to a panic situation along with stigma and misinformation. Ironically, despite how dreadful they may seem, not all seizure episodes need urgent hospital referral.

To bridge this significant gap, the Department of Pediatrics at AIIMS Nagpur, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), is working on the project Tele-school Health led Epilepsy Smart Schools in India (Tele_ESSI). Under the initiative, a first-of-its-kind mobile application was launched by Dr. (Prof.) Prashant Joshi, Executive Director of AIIMS, in the presence of **Mr. Kush Motwani, IAS**. It is a mobile-based tool to empower teachers and parents with action-oriented knowledge. The application contains cartoon-based animated films on epilepsy, which also include first aid for seizures.

The key Features of the App are:
HOW to identify a seizure?
WHEN to send the child immediately to the Hospital? and
WHAT to do when a Seizure event occurs?

“By working with local health authorities, the goal is to integrate the app into school health programs. Let’s spread awareness, understanding, and change to create a better living for the children with epilepsy”, said **Dr (Prof) Prashant Joshi. Mr Kush Motwani, IAS**, called the initiative a remarkable example of how digital innovation can directly strengthen school health systems and encouraged wider adoption across educational institutes. In order to ensure a smooth procedure, he also promised to help this effort in every manner possible. “We hope that appropriate knowledge among teachers will help in reducing the missed school days, social isolation, and physical harm during seizure episodes in children with epilepsy”, said Dr (Prof) Meenakshi Girish, Head of Pediatrics department.

The mobile application is easy to use and scientific knowledge about epilepsy is provided in lucid and vernacular language for the teachers, primary health care providers, as well as parents and students, said Dr. Shikha Jain, Pediatric Neurologist and Principal Investigator for

the project. She was supported by Dr Sujiv Akkilagunta, Dr Urmila Dahake, and Dr Prasenjit Patil in organising the program.

With the Tele-ESSI mobile app, AIIMS Nagpur envisions every school having at least one trained teacher or staff member equipped to manage emergencies with calm and clarity. By working with education departments and local health authorities, the goal is to integrate the app into school health programs nationwide. A hope for a more inclusive society where all children with epilepsy can attend school without stigma was initiated during the launch. During the launch, participants received a dedicated QR code to access and share the app widely, ensuring that seizure literacy reaches even remote communities.

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