

To All Provincial Directors of Health Services
All Regional Directors of Health Services
All Directors of Teaching Hospitals and District General Hospitals

The Programme for Elimination of Mother to child transmission of syphilis and HIV (EMTCT of syphilis and HIV) in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has been identified as a country which can achieve the Elimination status of congenital syphilis and mother to child transmission of HIV.

To achieve the elimination status, effective universal coverage of screening for syphilis and HIV during pregnancy need to be established. In Sri Lanka, screening for syphilis during pregnancy has achieved almost universal coverage (98%).

The policy decision of screening pregnant women for HIV was taken by the Ministry of Health after a series of consultations and the decision was to couple it with existing syphilis screening.


Ministry of Health seeks the commitment and cooperation of provincial health authorities in the identified districts to implement the EMTCT of syphilis and HIV programme.

It is necessary to take measures to scale up services for antenatal screening of Syphilis and HIV in your district/institutions as per the guidelines given below.

- All mothers are to be screened before 12 weeks of gestation for Syphilis and HIV (preferably at the first visit).
- Antenatal clinic services (MOH clinics and Hospital ANC clinics) have to arrange collection of 5cc of blood in a vacutainer tube and transport to the STD clinic for Syphilis and HIV testing. The method of sample transport need to be locally adopted, after discussions with RDHS, MOMCH, MO/STD and MOHs.
- STD clinics have to carry out Syphilis and HIV screening tests on the blood samples received from ANC clinics and send reports to the relevant officers.
- The information on reactive VDRL reports and HIV positive reports need to be informed to the MO, MOH or VOG and measures should be taken to strictly maintain the confidentiality of the information.
- The screening test positive pregnant women need to be referred to the STD clinic for further management.
- All pregnant women with Syphilis or HIV should be provided appropriate services including institutional care, without stigma or discrimination.
- EMTCT of syphilis and HIV programme need to be reviewed at the district level every six months with the participation of staff of the STD clinic, MOHs, MOMCH and RDHS.

The districts identified for the year 2013/2014 are Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy, Galle, Matara and Hambantota.

I reiterate the policy of the Government of Sri Lanka is to provide a comprehensive antenatal care package to pregnant women for a successful pregnancy outcome and it includes providing services for syphilis and HIV testing for all. Your cooperation is earnestly requested.


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