



A Family Epidemic: *A tale of a Measles Outbreak, effecting 7 beautiful children of the same family*

“Seeing my seven children suffering from same life threatening condition was more than a couple of month’s long misery as it was a ‘curse in succession, started from my oldest son and did not stop until it got all of my seven innocent children.”

This is a narration by a 47 years old businessman Haji Dilbar, who hails from Mohmand Agency but settled in Chitral with his family. He further stated that “One fine morning, my son Kamran, who is the elder in all siblings came back home from school with a very high temperature accompanied by irritation in nose and mouths. Like the routine fever management, we gave him Paracetamol thinking it will bring the fever down and within a couple of days he will be normal. But the next two days proved us wrong as the fever stayed and to make things worse a strange red rash covered his body.

It was the third night of my child’s sufferings and we were really panicking not knowing the real cause, was it an insect bite or a reaction? We were not sure. Nearest medical facility is 3 hours walk from my house, so we planned to take him to the doctor the next morning. Suddenly that night my youngest daughter Saira started screaming and complained of the same signs and symptoms that of Kamran. That was the start of the real nightmare, I and my wife did not sleep the whole night and while leaving the house for the doctor observed another of my children Awais, in the same condition. We went to the DHQ Hospital in Chitral and upon a very short examination of my three children the doctor diagnosed them with Measles.

The doctor mentioned that Measles weakens the immune system and renders children very susceptible to fatal complications from diarrhea, pneumonia and malnutrition so all I have to do is avoid my children from the above complications and secondly get them all vaccinated. The doctor also mentioned that Measles is a highly contagious viral disease, which affects mostly children. It is transmitted via droplets from the nose, mouth or throat of infected persons.



Haji Dilbar With his children, all of them suffered from Measles

Since we noticed that our children were in safe hands and upon knowing the harsh reality that as our children have not been vaccinated in the past against Measles therefore the remaining four of our children are also more likely to suffer from this disease. Hence it was high time to ask the doctor for all sorts of information.

With patience, struggle and prayers Haji Dilbar was able to pass 2 dark months of his seven children sufferings, which could have been very easily avoided by accessing “Free Vaccination Services” offered by Government of Pakistan via its Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) catering for 9 Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPDs) all across Pakistan.

According to Haji Dilbar, knowledge multiplies when shared hence he serves as a volunteer in his village and keeps a keen eye on any measles affected families in the village so that he can assist.

But the key to healthy living according to Haji Dilbar is Prevention, and for that he ensures that all the children in his village are vaccinated. He played a major role in the most recent Measles Supplementary Immunizations Activities (SIAs) from 19 – 31st May, 2014 in KP and Sindh provinces of Pakistan. All of advocacy and social mobilization activities were led by Haji Dilbar and he claims that almost 90% of the community living in their area is now sensitized on vaccination importance.