

Thalassemia Major; An Incurable and Fatal Blood Disease

A few noteworthy facts; Some food for thoughts; A challenge

Thalassemia Major; a collective misery:

Physical ordeal for the child, mental anguish for the family, burden for the society. Thalassemia major is nothing but an agony; an agony which, though not curable, is preventable *provided*,

Each one of us plays his part

Blood transfusion, elimination of excess iron and removal of spleen are only a losing and lost battle which entails nothing but financial disaster, waste of time and compounding the already insurmountable miseries. It offers no peace of mind and soul, it only aggravates economic miseries and social woes.

This is the story of a family with one thalassemic child.

Would you like to go through this experience?

Preventing pregnancies which are at risk of producing children with thalassemia major is the only sure way of avoiding this catastrophe. This can be accomplished through a simple and inexpensive test called "HEMOGLOBIN ELECTROPHORESIS". It is available in most cities of Pakistan. In principal every individual should have his thalassemia status determined; this however is an expensive proposition. It is therefore recommended to carry out this test in the following situations:

- (a) Pregnant ladies
- (b) Young individuals who are contemplating wedlock
- (c) Members of a family with a child with thalassemia minor or major

Thalassemia major can only be transmitted to the children if both parents have thalassemia minor which itself is neither a worrisome nor a serious illness. Its importance lies in its being instrumental in the birth of a

child with thalassemias major to parents who both have thalassemia minor. It is therefore strongly recommended that

"Two individuals with thalassemia minor must not marry each other".

Let us play our role in this campaign for the existing and the future generations, for the society, the nation and the country. Let us spread this message to every home, street, town and city so that our future generations are protected from this dreadful and fatal disease. Will you not do this for the sake of your children?

If you don't do it now, who will do it and when?

You are urged to go through these lines yourself and have your children, brothers, sisters, relatives, and friends also read it. As your share to this campaign, you are requested to have ten copies made and distributed and

Let a candle light another candle .

This shall be a laudable proof of your social and moral obligation.

Marriage between first cousins is neither a religious bar nor is there any social barrier . Since chances of first cousins inheriting the thalassemia gene are higher than in the general population, it is mandatory to determine the thalassemia status and to ensure that the thalassemia gene is not harbored by both of them. If only one of them has the gene, there is no medical restriction on this marriage. But if the gene is present in both of them, then for God's sake avoid this marriage at all cost. God be with us and be our mentor.
