

SGPGIMS Guidelines for the Management of Thalassemia and other Hemoglobinopathies and Hemophilia during the period of COVID-19 Outbreak

Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS), Lucknow, is in the forefront in the State of Uttar Pradesh, in the laboratory testing and management of patients with COVID-19. Patients with thalassemia major and other hemoglobinopathies have altered immune function due to multiple transfusions, splenomegaly and/or splenectomy, and thus their repeated visits to hospitals managing COVID-19 patients, should be preferably avoided during the pandemic of COVID-19, in the interest of the safety of the patients, as they are a vulnerable group. SGPGIMS has opened a Rajdhani Covid Hospital, with a redistribution of existing medical and paramedical manpower to the Rajdhani Covid Hospital, and thus the need to curtail existing services, especially those which can be provided by other centres of the State.

In view of the above facts, the following Guidelines have been decided by the Institute for the Management of patients with Thalassemia and other Hemoglobinopathies and Hemophilia during the period of COVID-19 Outbreak.

1. Patients will be encouraged to take transfusions at the district hospitals/Medical Colleges nearest to their homes. The National Health Mission is already extending financial support for transfusions and chelation therapy to 15 centres in 14 districts of UP (Annexure-1), and patients can go to these Centres. This will avoid the travel and the inherent risks involved with travel, especially to SGPGIMS, which is actively involved in COVID care. This will also reduce the crowding in the wards of SGPGIMS which is of paramount importance in the current time. The staff (doctors, social worker) of the Departments of Medical Genetics and Hematology will provide telephonic/video conferencing consultation to the doctors in the district hospitals/Medical Colleges and patients if they have any queries regarding management of these patients.
2. The Departments of Medical Genetics and Hematology will provide transfusions to the patients who due to different reasons need transfusions at SGPGIMS, for e.g. to those who have developed red cell antibodies and need special services of cross matching by the department of Transfusion Medicine Dept. or have developed some complications like iron overload leading to cardiac failure, endocrine complications, or because of their being residents of Lucknow or nearby areas etc. A negative COVID test of the patient and one relative who is likely to stay with the patient would be required either from SGPGIMS or from an outside approved lab. The patients will be given appointments telephonically so that the admissions are stalled to ensure that on each day only few patients are admitted due to constraint of beds and manpower and need to maintain adequate distance between them. At the time of admission, consent will be taken regarding the background risk of exposure to COVID-19 in SGPGIMS.

3. The Department of Medical Genetics will continue to provide prenatal diagnosis by invasive methods for beta thalassemia and other genetic disorders on OPD basis as these facilities are not available anywhere in Uttar Pradesh. However, for the HLA Typing being offered by the Dept of Hematology for thalassemic children who opt for Bone Marrow Transplantation, it would be preferable that it is done after the lockdown period, since it entails taking samples from all the entire family members.
4. The same principles will be adopted in the management of Hemophilia patients. The Dept of Hematology is supplying anti-hemophilic factors (AHF) procured through NHM and UP Govt. funds to 26 districts in UP (Annexure-2) and patients will be encouraged to take the on demand AHFs in the Centre nearest to their home. Those who need treatment at SGPGIMS due to some reasons e.g. being residents of Lucknow or nearby areas, development of serious bleeding complications and/or requirement of surgery due to haemophilia related or unrelated medical problems will be attended to on urgent basis in the special holding ward after proper screening, while awaiting their COVID-19 test report. Consent regarding the background risk of getting exposed to corona virus remains same as mentioned above for thalassemia patients.

SGPGIMS, Lucknow is committed to the well being of patients with thalassemia and other hemoglobinopathies and haemophilia. This change in policy is temporary and will be modified as the situation of COVID-19 evolves. The goal of SGPGIMS is trying to “*achieve care of non-covid patients without unduly exposing them to the risk of corona virus*”

Annexure-1**Name of Districts and Medical Colleges/District Hospitals in UP supported by National Health Mission for Treatment of Thalassemia**

Name of District	Name of Medical College/District Hospital
Agra	SN Medical College
Aligarh	JLN Medical College
GB Nagar	SSPH&PGTI
Gorakhpur	BRD Medical College
Jhansi	MLB Medical College
Kanpur	GSVM
Lucknow	KGMU
	SGPGIMS
Meerut	LLRM Medical College
Prayagraj	MLN Medical College
Varanasi	IMS BHU
Bareilly	District Hospital
Bulandshahar	District Hospital
Saharanpur	District Hospital

Annexure 2**Name of Districts and Medical Colleges/District Hospitals in UP supported by National Health Mission for Treatment of Haemophilia**

	Name of District	Name of Medical College/District Hospital
1.	Agra	SN Medical College
2.	Aligarh	JLN Medical College
3.	Allahabad	MLN Medical College
4.	Azamgarh	Govt. Medical College
5.	Ambedkar Nagar	Govt. Medical College
6.	Gorakhpur	BRD Medical College
7.	Banda	Govt. Medical College
8.	Jalaun	Govt. Medical College
9.	Jhansi	MLB Medical College
10.	Kanpur	GSVM Medical College
11.	Saifai, Etawah	Rural Institute of Medical Sciences
12.	Varanasi	IMS, BHU
13.	Saharanpur	Govt. Medical College
14.	Meerut	LLRM Medical College
15.	Lucknow	SGPGIMS
16.	Lucknow	KGMU
17.	Gautam Budh Nagar	SSPH&PGTI
18.	Ghaziabad	District Hospital
19.	Bareilly	District Hospital
20.	Basti	District Hospital
21.	Gonda	District Hospital
22.	G B Nagar	District Hospital
23.	Lalitpur	District Hospital
24.	Moradabad	District Hospital
25.	Bahraich	District Hospital
26.	Mirzapur	Govt. Medical College