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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
5326	12.06.2019	13.06.2019	Malappuram Kerala	www.thenewsminute.com/English https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/six-year-old-malappuram-dies-suspected-case-diphtheria-103495
Title:	Six year old Malappuram dies suspected case diphtheria in district Malappuram, Kerala			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-Malappuram, SSU-Kerala			

A six-year-old boy from Edappal in Malappuram died on Tuesday at Medical College Thrissur in a suspected case of diphtheria, an infectious disease of nose and throat. This disease is easily preventable by vaccination. However, according to the health authorities, the child was not administered vaccination despite a rigorous campaign for the same by the health department workers.

The child was admitted with fever and sore throat at a hospital in Malappuram on June 8, Saturday, and was referred to the Medical College after his condition worsened on June 10, Monday.

"The cause of the death is yet to be confirmed, although the boy exhibited symptoms of diphtheria. We are yet to receive the confirmation report," K Sakeena, District Medical Officer - Malappuram, told TNM.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends Bacille Calmette Guerin (BCG) vaccine at birth and diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP)-containing vaccine at 6, 10 and 14 weeks of age. However, Sakeena said that the only BCG vaccine (for tuberculosis) was administered to the child.

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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"The family was reluctant to administer the vaccine for diphtheria despite the department's consistent and wide campaigning. The health workers had made several visits to houses where parents had not taken their children for diphtheria vaccine," she added.

As of 2016, 23,912 out of 342,657 children in Malappuram below the age of five were not immunized, even once in their lifespan, and more than one out of every three children aged between five and 16 have never been vaccinated in the district.

A few religious groups are against the vaccine, which has been attributed as the reason for lack of immunisation in the district. In fact, some sections of Muslim and Christian populations have, in the past, rejected the vaccine due to religious reasons. Some parents (from all religions) have refused the vaccine due to fear and misinformation spread.

In June 2016, two diphtheria cases were reported in the district. Muhammed Afsal Ahamed and Ameen, both 15-year-old, were the victims.

According to reports, in 2016, over 500 cases had been reported across districts in the state.

In 2017, Dr Shimna Azeez, a medical officer at Manjeri Medical College in Malappuram, during one of her repeated attempts to create awareness on the need to administer Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccination at a school, took the injection herself after she was challenged by a parent to do so.

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