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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
4499	25.01.2018	29.01.2018	Madurai Tamil Nadu	www.thehindu.com/English http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/two-children-die-of-suspected-diphtheria-in-madurai/article22524796.ece
Title:	Two children die of suspected diphtheria in Madurai district, Tamil Nadu			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-Madurai, SSU- Tamil Nadu			

Last week, two children in Madurai district died of suspected diphtheria, a communicable disease caused by bacterial infection. This comes as a shock since there had not been a diphtheria-related death in the State in recent years, owing to improved vaccination coverage.

One of the deceased was P. Ramu (7), daughter of G. Premkumar, a mini bus driver from Chellayipuram near Oomatchikulam, who died at Government Rajaji Hospital (GRH) on Friday last. Acknowledging the death of another child at a private multispeciality hospital here last week, officials from Health and Family Welfare department, however, refused to divulge further details about the child.

Ramu's brother P. Hariswaran (10), who was also admitted to the GRH last week with similar symptoms, has been recuperating well at an isolation ward at the hospital.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, P. Rekha, Ramu's mother, said her daughter developed fever and sore throat on January 13. After getting her treated at nearby clinics, they admitted her to a private hospital at Iyer Bungalow here on Tuesday last.

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Disclaimer:- This is a media alert subject to verification.

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

22-Sham Nath Marg, Delhi – 110 054

For more information please contact: Media Scanning & Verification Cell: - Phone (011)23946029

Email: - idsppediaalert@gmail.com, idspp-misc@nic.in, idspp-npo@nic.in

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"The doctors said phlegm has formed like a tumour at her throat and it had to be surgically removed," Ms. Rekha said, adding meanwhile the child's condition worsened with swelling of face. She coughed up blood.

According to GRH doctors, the child was brought in a critical condition on the night of Wednesday last. "We administered anti-diphtheria serum. A tracheostomy was also performed as she could not breathe, mainly due to formation of a pseudo-membrane around throat, a typical symptom of diphtheria. But we could not save her," a senior doctor said.

Prophylactic doses were administered to the family members who were in contact with her.

D. Maruthupandian, Dean, GRH, said though the symptoms resembled diphtheria, it could be confirmed only after the result of a culture test, to be conducted at Christian Medical College in Vellore, was received.

K. Kolandaisamy, Director of Public Health, however, said though clinical presentation in both the cases were like diphtheria, the culture samples tested negative. "Nevertheless, we are not taking any chances and all precautionary measures are being taken," he added.

Pointing out that DPT vaccine (for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis), a part of Universal Immunisation Programme, had to be administered to children in three doses at six, ten and 14 weeks after birth, and the first booster dose between 16 and 24 months, Dr. Kolandaisamy said immunisation programme had been further strengthened to ensure coverage of the second booster dose at around five years of age.

He added that though diphtheria cases were reported in single digits in the State every year, there had been no deaths in recent years.

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