



Media Scanning & Verification Cell



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

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
6851	19.07.2022	20.07.2022	Maharashtra	www.timesofindia.com/English https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/mucormycosis-lingers-4-districts-report-new-cases/articleshowprint/92968811.cms
Title:	Mucormycosis lingers; 4 districts report new cases in Maharashtra			
Action By CSU, IDSP –NCDC	Information communicated to DSU- Pune, Aurangabad, Kolhapur, Ambajogai, SSU- Maharashtra			

New cases of Covid-associated mucormycosis, or black fungus, continue to show up in Maharashtra.

Between June 1 and July 10, state-run medical colleges and hospitals in Pune, Aurangabad, Kolhapur and Ambajogai operated on eight patients with the invasive fungal infection, a report by the Medical Education and Drug Department (MEDD) stated.

These are not repeat cases. Mucormycosis can recur if damaged tissue is not properly cleared out during the first surgery.

Doctors said the MEDD report suggests Omicron and its sublineages, even if they are not causing serious Covid, can trigger the deadly fungal infection.

Pune's Sassoon Hospital has had the most number of cases between June 1 and July 10. "We have operated on four patients with Covid-linked mucormycosis since June 1.

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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

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Page 1



These are fresh cases, not relapses,” said the hospital’s chief ENT surgeon Dr Samir Joshi.

Dr Joshi has treated 22 cases of post-Covid mucormycosis between March 1 and July 18. “These are patients in whom diabetes or high blood sugar is invariably seen,” Dr Joshi said.

Also, none of the 22 patients Dr Joshi treated over the past four months received steroids for Covid-19.

“Whether diabetic or not, raised blood sugar is the single most important factor in the development of this deadly disease, irrespective of steroid use,” he said. Mucor fungus has an enzyme (ketone reductase), which allows it to thrive in high blood glucose and acidic conditions, he said.

Some patients weren't even tested for Covid. Flu-like symptoms were so mild in them that they never thought to get tested and went on to recover without medication. “But they started to complain of facial numbness, loose teeth, nasal blockage and a blackish palate. Days later, they were diagnosed with mucormycosis,” Dr Joshi said.

The government medical college in Kolhapur had two patients in June. “The mucor spread in both patients was extensive but limited to the paranasal sinuses and nasal septum. One of them lost vision in one eye. But there was no brain involvement, which is seen in very serious cases,” said the hospital's ENT surgeon Dr Vasanti Patil.

Both patients were Covid-negative at the time of their mucor diagnosis.

Dr Patil said, “They were admitted for uncontrolled diabetes with ketoacidosis. One of them had a history of flu-like illness. Neither had had a Covid test.”

Before Covid, the hospital would get just one or two mucormycosis cases a year.

“Now, two-and-a-half years into the pandemic, I'm still seeing one or two cases every month. That means the burden is still high, even if cases have dropped significantly,” Dr Patil added.

During the second wave last year, Dr Patil said she had 209 mucormycosis cases between May and June.

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Page 2



People with uncontrolled diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease, need to be cautious even if they've had mild Covid or Covid-like illness, she said.

Most private hospitals have not seen new cases of mucormycosis. "We have not treated a single new case recently. Those who sought care were treated for mucormycosis in the past and were all clear when they came to us for routine follow-ups," said Dr Aditi Sinha, consultant ENT surgeon, Masina Hospital, Mumbai.

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