

25– 12 – 2023

News: Noma

- Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) added noma to its list of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) underscoring the urgent need to address this health challenge and allocate resources for prevention and treatment.

Noma

- Noma, also known as **cancrum oris** or **gangrenous stomatitis**, is a severe **gangrenous disease affecting children aged 3-10 in poor communities.**
- Gangrene is a **dangerous and potentially fatal condition that happens when the blood flow to a large area of tissue is cut off.**
- Noma, **derived from the Greek "nomē" meaning "to devour,"** manifests as severe gangrene of the mouth and face.
- Evidence indicates that **noma is caused by bacteria found in the mouth.**
- This **non contagious disease exploits weakened defense with a mortality rate of around 90% and poses a significant threat to marginalized children in extreme poverty and malnutrition.**
- Risk factors include **poor oral hygiene, malnutrition, weakened immune systems, poverty.**

Geographic Distribution and Historical Context

- Noma is prevalent in developing countries, especially sub-Saharan Africa, affecting poor children aged 3-10.
- Historical records show noma was reported in concentration camps during World War II and disappeared in the Western world with economic progress, emphasizing its link to poverty.

Consequences and Treatment Challenges

- Survivors face severe consequences like facial disfigurement, jaw muscle spasms, oral incontinence, and speech problems.
- Early detection is crucial, with therapy most effective in the disease's initial stages.