

Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS)

Why in News?

Union Health Ministry has recently sent a team to Pune to assess the situation following a reported outbreak of Guillain-Barré syndrome with 73 cases so far.

- It is an **autoimmune neurological disorder** in which a person's immune system attacks their **peripheral nerves**, leading to muscle weakness that can progress to paralysis.
- **Symptoms** - It starts usually with tingling and weakness in the feet and legs before spreading to the upper body, arms and face.
- It also includes a pins and needles feeling in the toes, fingers, ankles or wrists, back pain, pain in the legs, not being able to walk or climb stairs, trouble with facial movements and double vision.
- For some people this can lead to paralysis of the legs, arms or face.
- **Affecting age** - It can develop over a few days or several weeks. People of any age can be affected, but it is more common in adults and males.
- The condition is rare, with an estimated incidence of 1/2 per 100,000 population.
- **Causes** - The causes of GBS are still not fully understood- in most cases, it occurs after a viral or bacterial infection.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), infection with the bacteria *Campylobacter jejuni*, which causes gastroenteritis is one of the most common risk factors for GBS.
- People can also develop GBS after having the flu or other viral infections including cytomegalovirus, Epstein-Barr virus, and the Zika virus.
- In rare instances, vaccinations may increase the risk of people getting GBS, but the chance of this occurring is extremely low.
- GBS can lead to life-threatening complications when it affects the autonomic nervous system which controls your blood pressure and heart rate.
- **Treatment** - There is no known cure for GBS. Treatment includes supportive care and some immunological therapies.

Reference

[The Hindu | Guillain-Barré Syndrome](#)