

## **UNDER-FIVE'S CLINIC**

The concept of under-five's clinic is derived from the Well Baby clinic of the West, for comprehensive health care of children below five years of age. This clinic provides preventive services along with health, supervision, treatment, nutritional surveillance and health education. The services are economical within available resources for a large numbers of young children.

Under-five age groups are vulnerable and special risk group constituting a major portion of total population with high death rate. The important causes of morbidity and mortality of this group are mainly ARI, diarrhea, neonatal and perinatal diseases, Infections and accidents. These conditions are mostly preventable with adequate health care. This age group also needs regular monitoring for growth and development. For these reasons, the under-five age group children are provided with special health care through this clinic services. The services provided by the clinic are set out in the symbol, which has been proposed for under-five's clinics in India

The apex of the large triangle represents care in illness, the left triangle represents adequate nutrition, the right triangle represents immunization and the central red triangle represents family planning. The line bordering the big triangle represents health teaching to the mother.

### **Care in Illness**

The care of illness for children provided in the under-five clinics includes the followings:

1. Diagnosis and treatment of:
  - a. Acute illness, e.g. oral rehydration therapy.
  - b. Chronic illness including physical, mental, congenital and acquired abnormalities.
  - c. Disorders of growth and development. services.
2. X-ray and laboratory
3. Referral services.

Care and treatment of sick children are rendered by the trained health worker on the basis of the felt need of the

## **Adequate Nutrition**

Adequate nutrition is vital for growth and development of children. The health worker should ensure about adequate breastfeeding, weaning and balanced diet of the under-five children. Almost all nutritional disorders like protein energy malnutrition (PEM), anemia, rickets, and nutritional blindness occur in this age group.

Attempts to be made to identify early onset of growth failure and malnutrition among children. One of the basic activities of the under-five's clinic is growth monitoring. It is done by weighing the child periodically at monthly intervals during the first year, every 2 months during the second year and every 3 months thereafter up to the age of 5 to 6 years.

Health checkups are done every 3 to 6 months by physical examination of the child and appropriate laboratory tests. The child health card is maintained which assist to identify 'at risk' children who can be enlisted for special care and referral for better treatment.

Food supplementation or on-site feeding are often an integral part of intervention strategies.

The ICDS projects have taken up the supplementary feeding of children below 6 years of age. Nutrition education to the mothers is an important aspect of the clinic.

## **Immunization**

Immunization of six killer diseases, viz. tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis and measles are administered as per national immunization schedule recommendation. The health worker should motivate and promote the immunization acceptance to prevent morbidity, mortality and disability hazards by these six killer diseases.

## **Family Planning**

The family planning program is successfully conducted through these clinics. The mothers attending the clinic receive counseling with different aspects of family planning practices, which is a significant concern for the health and well-being of the child.

## **Health Education**

Health education to the mother is an essential and compulsory activity of the under-five's clinic. The mothers should receive the information on various aspects of child care and child rearing practices. Preventive measures against malnutrition, ARI, diarrhea tuberculosis, worm infestations, etc. should be informed to the mothers to improve awareness about the disease and its prevention.