

Experts discuss care for immune disorders

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Calcutta: A two-day conference on a group of rare genetic disorders that impair the body's immune system brought together doctors, researchers and scientists from India and abroad.

Primary immunodeficiencies (PID), now referred to as Inborn Errors of Immunity (IEI), are a group of rare genetic disorders that impair the body's immune system. They increase susceptibility to recurrent infections, autoimmune complications, and severe inflammatory disorders.

Due to the complexity of symptoms and lack of awareness, these disorders frequently remain underdiagnosed or misdiagnosed, leading to delayed treatment.

"In the world of Inborn Errors of Immunity, manifestations can range from recurrent infections to complex multi-system involvement where clinical signs appear unrelated, and the dots often do not connect. This assembly

of experts is meant to ensure that those dots are connected through scientific exchange, shared experience, and collaborative learning," said Priyankar Pal, organising secretary and professor and head of paediatrics at the Institute of Child Health.

"The disorders are often hereditary but need a trigger to manifest. Common symptoms include recurrent infections of unusual severity. Even a seemingly innocuous virus can have a deadly effect. In many cases, this occurs in children. However, the disease may also present itself later in life," he said.

Severe Combined Immunodeficiency (SCID) is the most common example of IEI in India, said doctors and researchers at the conclave.

"Currently, more than 500 genetic forms of PID have been described, and recent population studies suggest the true prevalence may be as high as 1 in 1,200-2,000 individuals. This conference provides an important platform to improve recognition, diagnosis, and man-

agement of these conditions in both children and adults," said Arghya Chattopadhyay, rheumatologist at the Asian Institute of Immunology and Rheumatology.

The conference — organised by the Indian Society for Primary Immune Deficiency (ISPID), supported by the global organisation Foundation for Primary Immunodeficiency Diseases (FPID) — featured faculty from the US and Europe, alongside Indian experts.

It outlined the priorities for strengthening immune disorder care across India:

Early infancy screening: Identifying warning signs of immune deficiencies in newborns and infants is non-negotiable, doctors said. Children suffering from recurrent bouts of infections with unusual severity must get screened, they said.

Multi-speciality collaboration: Strengthening coordination among paediatricians, haematologists, rheumatologists, and geneticists to manage complex immune disorders.