
Dr Deepak Polpakara

Dr. Deepak Polpakara is a physician with a Masters' degree in Public Health. He has more than 22 years of public health experience in vaccine safety surveillance, polio surveillance and routine immunization (new vaccine introductions, trainings, cold chain management). His areas of interest are disease surveillance, AEFI surveillance, pharmacovigilance, and quality management systems in public health programmes.

He has been working in vaccine safety surveillance for the past 12 years. Since 2017, he has been leading the AEFI Secretariat as Senior Team Lead – AEFI. During this time, the AEFI surveillance has transitioned from an email-based reporting system to a software management-based system, electronic recording of minor AEFIs has been initiated, signal management system for vaccines was set up and a quality management system for AEFI surveillance has been rolled out in states upto the session site level. The processes of causality assessments, AEFI committee meetings, trainings, etc., have been streamlined with greater accountability at the state levels. Coordination mechanisms and data sharing protocols with drug regulators and pharmacovigilance partners are in place and implemented. The use of anaphylaxis kits with adrenaline by health workers at session sites for early management of suspected anaphylaxis was an innovation which is now being replicated in other countries. The country has also transitioned from dispensing paracetamol tablets at session sites to syrup paracetamol. He has led the development of the national AEFI surveillance operational guidelines of 2024.

As the National Consultant for Immunization Trainings for UNICEF at NIHF, New Delhi, he has organized and conducted monitoring and evaluation of immunization trainings for all health cadres including cold chain technicians. He has contributed to the updation of training modules of health workers, medical officers, cold chain handlers. Additionally, he has coordinated a number of national and state level trainings for Measles campaign in 2011-12. He was instrumental in setting up the National Cold Chain and Vaccine Management Resource Centre, NIHF; He also conducted the first national Effective Vaccine Management assessment in 2012.

He has worked with private health consulting firms and national NGOs where he provided technical support for decentralised NRHM planning for Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim and Haryana. He has trained NGOs on proposal development, monitoring and evaluation of RCH projects. As a Surveillance Medical Officer for NPSP-WHO, he worked on polio eradication (AFP surveillance and polio campaigns) in districts of western UP.

He has attended the Advanced Vaccinology Course at Annecy, France in 2015 and participated in international vaccine safety surveillance meetings and trainings in Malaysia, Chile and Bangkok. He has contributed chapters on AEFI surveillance to many guidelines and has published a couple of articles in peer-reviewed journals.