BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

Papaya leaf extracts can cure dengue: Study

August 18, 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: With hundreds of people in Southeast Asia falling prey to the deadly dengue each year, there has been a frantic search for novel and more effective methods to curb the disease. Though Sanofi experts and Ministry of Health, Malaysia are swearing on the maiden dengue vaccine to be available by early 2015, a Malaysian research organization is looking at home-made therapies.

A research study led by Dr Soobitha Subenthran and team from the Institute for Medical Research (IMR) in Kuala Lumpur indicated that papaya leaf extracts had magical powers to cure dengue by increasing blood platelet count.

Scientists conducted clinical trials on 288 dengue fever patients. Half of them were given papaya leaf juice and other half received standard dengue treatment. These two groups were then constantly monitored and their blood count checked every eight hours for 48 hours.

The group administered with papaya juice showed significant rise in platelet counts compared to the control group. Prof Dr Saringat Haji Baie, School of Pharmaceutical Sciences in Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Penang, endorsed the findings elaborating that the medication actually worked and studies are underway to prove the properties scientifically.

Dr Haji Baie suggested that IMR should deepen the research and find out more biochemical and medicinal aspects of the product which could effectively be used as medication against dengue.

With rains showering early on Southeast Asia dengue cases peaked this year, crossing 1000 mark. Mr Dubravka Selenic Minet, a medical officer with the World Health Organization Thailand, said, "The increasing burden of dengue in the Asia-Pacific region is a matter of serious concern since the disease is spreading to new geographical areas."