

# Tomato Flu:-a new thread

Vaishali Kulkarni<sup>1</sup>, Neha Dhurekar<sup>2</sup>, Kalyani Patil<sup>3</sup>

Department of Pharmacy, Shastry Institute of Pharmacy, Erandol, Jalgaon

## Abstract:-

Tomato flu is an infectious disease caused by an unexplained virus. The main symptoms of the infection are tomato-shaped blisters all over the body which enlarges to resemble the shape of a tomato, therefore being named as 'Tomato flu'. Most commonly affects children below the age of 5 years. Tomato flu is considered a "Hand, Foot and Mouth disease". The clinical manifestation of most cases is mild. It is a self-limiting infection which gets resolved on its own in 7-10 days. The disease was very contagious and it manifested with a rash mainly noticed in children younger than nine years. The rash was very painful and blisters were the size of small tomatoes, hence it was termed 'tomato flu'. The tomato flu is highly contagious among children and therefore the children should be kept indoors and avoid sharing of clothes or toys. Efforts should be undertaken to collect more specimens from the infected children and sent for identification to confirm the etiological agent.

**KEYWORDS:** - Tomato flu virus, Tomato fever, Hand-foot-and-mouth-disease (HFMD), COVID-19

## Introduction:-

After a dramatic and devastating disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for nearly 2 years now, as the world is slowly returning to normality with the slowed down spread of SARS-CoV-2, other viral and bacterial outbreaks have started to take over. Recently, on May 6, 2022, a viral infection named 'tomato flu' emerged in India in the state of Kerala. This rare viral infection got its name from the vegetable 'tomato' due to the bright red blisters that spread all over the body of the affected children, which gradually grew to the size of a tomato. Tomato flu has no link with corona virus, dengue, chikungunya and monkeypox, claims the centre. Reports have implied that tomato flu is a self-limiting disease which is primarily targeting young children between 1 to 10 years of age and adults with weak immunity. BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL claims that It is more likely that the virus is a side effect of either dengue fever or chikungunya, two viral infections spread by mosquitoes. Alternately, it could be a brand-new strain of the viral hand, foot, and mouth disease, which primarily affects children between the ages of one and five and immunocompromised adults. A lot of fluid intake in the form of water, juice, or milk is encouraged as dehydration is commonly seen.

Tomato flu being a rare infectious disease and with its recent emergence, no specific drugs are available now to treat this virus. Owing to the unavailability of disease-specific treatment, only the symptoms are managed like any other flu with antipyretics and analgesics accordingly. Ibuprofen or Acetaminophen can be used to treat the fever. Antibiotics are of no use unless the skin blisters become purulent. Bed rest is recommended along with proper hygiene and sanitation should be maintained. Affected children should be isolated for five to six days.

## Symptoms of tomato flu include:-

- Large, bright, red, fluid-filled blisters that resemble tomatoes
- High-grade fever
- Rashes
- Severe dehydration
- Tiredness
- Joint pain
- Body ache
- Lethargy
- Stomach cramps
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Swollen joints
- Skin Irritation
- Loss of appetite
- Discoloration in the hands, knees, and buttocks
- Runny nose and sneezing
- Frequent coughing

## Prevention Techniques for Tomato Flu:-

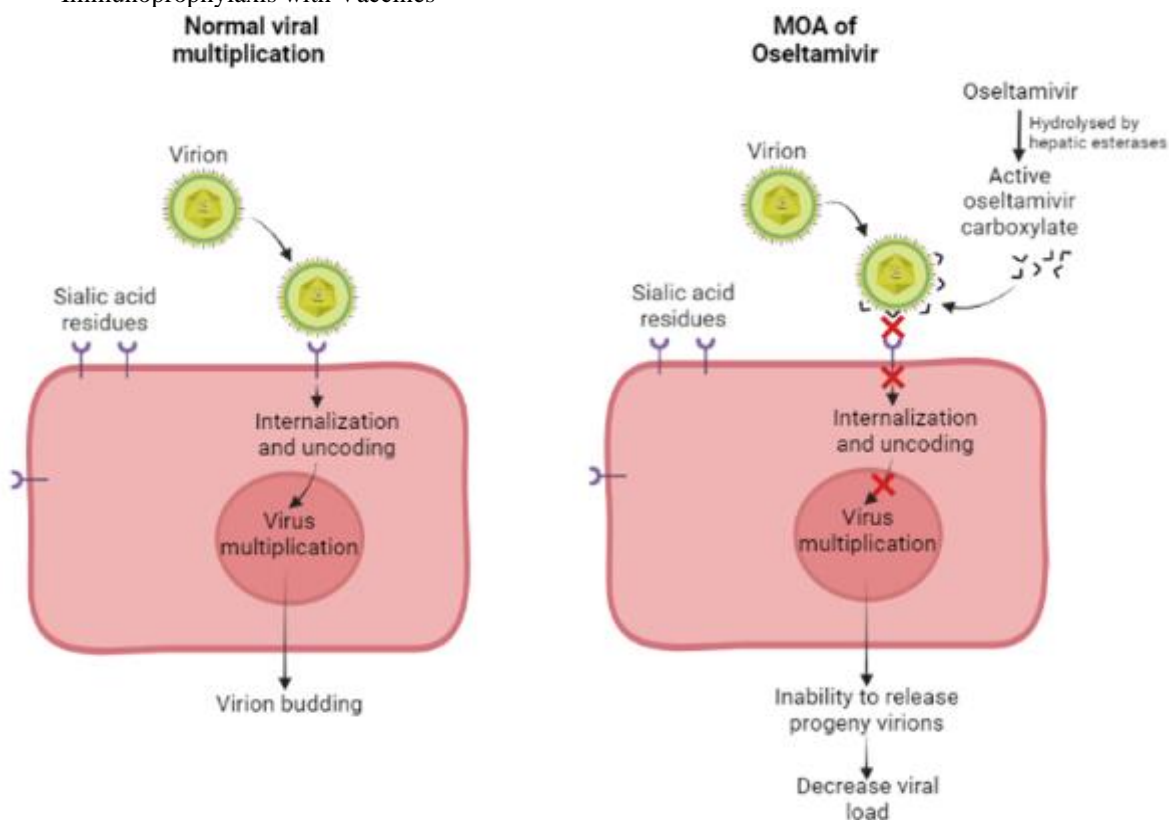
"Prevention is the best cure", this old adage fits perfectly for tomato flu. Since more research is needed to understand the causes and devise a treatment for it, the best way to keep our children safe from tomato fever is to adopt precautionary measures. Following are some preventive measures to avoid getting this flu:

- Avoid close contact with the infected person.

- Teach your children about this virus and its effects on the body.
- Educate them about the signs and symptoms of tomato fever so that they can maintain distance from any person showing or having those symptoms.
- Tell them not to shake hands, play, or hug any child who has symptoms of tomato fever.
- Encourage children to maintain hygiene and stop activities that involve bodily fluids like sucking their thumb or picking their nose.
- Tell them to use a handkerchief while sneezing or coughing if they have a runny nose or cough to avoid the spread of the disease.
- Prevent the infected child from sharing toys, clothes, food, or other items with other non-infected children.
- Tell them not to scratch or rub the blister and wash it every time you touch these blisters.
- Encourage your children to drink plenty of water, milk, juice, etc. to keep them hydrated.
- Isolate your child if they are showing symptoms of tomato fever.
- Regularly clean and sanitize all utensils, clothes, toys and other items of your children.
- It is recommended to use warm water to bathe or clean the skin of your child.
- Include immunity-boosters and nutrient-rich foods in the diet of your child

#### Drug for Tomato Flu:-

- Acyclovir
- Oseltamivir
- Arbidol (Umifenovir)
- Chloroquine Diphosphate (CQ)
- Rupintrivir
- Immunoglobulin
- Immunoprophylaxis with Vaccines



#### Mode of action of Oseltamivir

##### Epidemiology:-

The disease outbreak started in the Kollam district of Kerala where around 82 cases of Tomato flu have been till May 13, 2022, and the numbers are expected to go up further. A four-year-old child from Aryankavu, a village near the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border is the first case of Tomato flu which was reported on May 6, 2022.<sup>12</sup> Since then, 26 cases were found to be positive for Hand, Foot and Mouth disease in Orissa which is presumed to be Tomato flu.

##### CONCLUSION:-

Tomato flu cases were detected during the time when there an increasing tension of the outbreak of Monkey pox across the country. Though it is spread in rapidly, immediate actions taken by the government towards prevention and treatment has limited the infection spread to a large extent.

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