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Asha Kiran inmates suffer; blame it on 'low immunity'

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Two inmates of the Asha Kiran Complex, a home for the "mentally retarded" persons, died during their treatment earlier this month.

According to the officials of the shelter home, both the deaths were caused due to low immunity, resulting possibly from their retardation. However, medical experts do not confirm to their claims.

Twenty-six-year-old Akash was admitted to the Rajan Babu TB Hospital in GTB Nagar on April 25. He suc-

cumbed to tuberculosis (TB) on May 6. Another inmate of Asha Kiran, Shyam (25), was admitted to the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital at Rohini on May 8. He died two days later. Both of them were mentally retarded.

According to TC Nakh, administrator of Asha Kiran, Akash was admitted to the home in 1999. One year later, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. He was treated, but the disease struck again. Shyam was admitted to the home in January this year. He was on a permanent pacemaker, suffering from heart problems.

Officials of Asha Kiran assert that persons suffering from mental retardation have lower immunity. "The lifespan of a mentally retarded person is very low. When the inmates were admitted, they were suffering from multiple diseases which spread infection and also reduce their chances of surviving," said an official.

But, medical experts believe that mental retardation does not affect the lifespan of a person.

"Mental retardation, caused during birth, may not necessarily affect the immunity of a person," said Dr Sanjeev

Bagai, a consultant physician.

According to the figures of Asha Kiran, there had been 14 deaths in the shelter home. From 2005 to 2006, 14 deaths had been reported; from 2006 to 2007, 14 deaths; from 2007 till 2008, 34 deaths had been reported.

Thirty-seven deaths had been reported from 2009 to 2011. From 2009 to 2010, 20 inmates had died. The number of deaths from 2010 to 2011 was 17.

Nakh said that the number of deaths have drastically reduced now.

"Earlier, the number of deaths was more because