



## **INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH**

Department of Health Research – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
Government of India

**Media report (18 May to 31 May 2019)**  
**(ICMR IN NEWS)**

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## **Preface**

*The PR Unit/PRO office of ICMR since last one and half years have reached from (where is ICMR located) to (everyday mention of ICMR and DG ICMR in National Media). This change from where to why signifies the media visibility and importance of our organization within this stipulated time duration.*

*Every week Indian Council of Medical Research and Director General ICMR are mentioned by dozens of daily news papers, periodicals and magazines including online editions.*

*This week's reports (ICMR IN NEWS dated 18 May to 31 may 2019) includes the mention Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 16 news papers including top news papers such as The Times of India, Indian Express, Hindustan Times among others.*

*As an organization we first need to fill internal information vacuum at the headquarters as well as the Institutes for better visibility of ICMR which will pave way for complete dilution of external information gap between ICMR and external public including media, government and other related organizations.*

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**ICMR develops affordable quick test kits for diagnosing genetic bleeding disorders**

May 18, 2019/The Indian Express

**'Low-cost innovations must for affordable treatment'**

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## **ICMR develops affordable quick test kits for diagnosing genetic bleeding disorders**

May 18, 2019/The Indian Express

The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has developed a cost-effective and rapid point-of-care test kit for diagnosing genetic bleeding disorders such as haemophilia A and Von Willebrand disease (VWD). Diagnostics which are currently available require special equipment and are expensive. “Both Haemophilia A and VWD are under diagnosed disorders in our country. There are only handful of comprehensive diagnostic centres for bleeding disorders,” an official at ICMR said.

“Lack of awareness and diagnostic facilities, high cost of tests are some of the factors for under-diagnosis of bleeding disorders in our country,” he said.

According to the ICMR, the kit is the world’s first point-of-care test for specific diagnosis of any common bleeding disorder and costs less than Rs 50 in comparison to existing conventional test that cost around Rs 4,000 to Rs 10,000.

The newly developed kit would help in diagnosis within 30 minutes of blood sample collection. Also, this will be available at any level of health care system including primary health care centres (PHCs) since it does not require any special expertise or infrastructure. Worldwide, incidence of Haemophilia A is 1 per 10,000 male births and that of VWD is around 1 per cent of the general population.

“In India, there is no epidemiological data. We may have roughly 80,000-1,00,000 severe Haemophilia cases in our country, but the total number registered with Haemophilia Federation India (HFI) is only around 19,000,” the official said.

## **‘Low-cost innovations must for affordable treatment’**

May 18, 2019/The Times of India

Indian Council of Medical Research director general Balram Bhargava said that the focus of health policymakers should shift to universal healthcare for emergency care in India. Delivering the keynote address at the annual convocation of the 35th batch of Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTISMT) on Saturday, Bhargava said low-cost innovations were the need of the hour to ensure affordability and accessibility. He had a suggestion: tap the potential of Make in India project to manufacture medical devices at affordable costs. The guest of honour at the function, Metro Man E Sreedharan stressed on the need for quality work culture. “Vital ingredients for a successful profession are punctuality, integrity, professional competence and commitment to society,” he said. President of the institute, Dr Vijay Kumar Saraswat, presided over the function and conferred the degrees. SCTIMST director Asha Kishore and Dr P Sankara Sarma spoke at the event. As many as 147 senior residents, PhD scholars and students who graduated in 2018 after completing DM, MCh, postdoctoral fellowship, postdoctoral certificate courses in cardiac and neurological specialties, PhD, master of public health, MPhil and MS programmes received their degrees.

## Medical devices should be developed indigenously at affordable cost:

Prof Bhargava

May 19, 2019/United News of India



Medical devices should be developed indigenously at an affordable cost to ensure universal health care and emergency care in India, **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** Director General Prof Balram Bhargava has said. Speaking as the chief guest at the annual convocation of the 35th batch at Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) here on Saturday, Bhargava, who is also Secretary of Department of Health Research, said low cost innovations is the need of the hour to ensure affordability and accessibility for treatment. Former Managing Director of Delhi Metro, Dr E Sreedharan, who was the guest of honour at the function, stressed the need for quality of work culture for a successful profession.

## In a Kerala village, where virus struck, reason fights faith over unknown grave

May 20, 2019/The India Express

A year after Kerala waged a successful battle to contain the Nipah virus that claimed 17 lives, an old grave at Ground Zero of the outbreak is slowly emerging as a “pilgrim centre”. The grave, of an unknown person, is now being called a “dargah” by a section of residents at the Muslim-majority Sooppikkada village in Kozhikode district. They claim the virus targeted the village because the grave was “neglected over the years”. However, other residents have questioned “such superstition” and expressed concern that the grave, located on private land, could turn out to be a “money-making venture”. A local mosque committee, meanwhile, has adopted a “neutral stand” and is waiting for the findings of a probe ordered by the Samastha Kerala Jamiyyathul Ulema, an umbrella organisation that controls the majority of such panels in the state. An imam says the dargah came up with contributions from “outside the village”. The outbreak was reported in May-June last year after the first suspected case, Muhammed Sabith from the Valachuketil family in Sooppikkada, died on May 10. Later, a study conducted by Dr G Arunkumar of Manipal Centre for Virus Research, and supported by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, found that the virus was transmitted from fruit bats seen in the village.

## Stem cell therapy for spinal cord injury patients unethical, say experts

May 21, 2019/The Times of India

NEW DELHI: The Spinal Cord Society of India has warned doctors against offering stem cell therapy to spinal cord injury (SCI) patients. In a statement published in the European Spine Journal, the expert body said that though there exists sufficient pre-clinical evidence in support of the safety and potency of cell-based interventions, the same is not able to be translated robustly at clinical level. Nevertheless, he added, many centres have sprung up in big cities like Delhi and Mumbai that are using stem cell therapy to treat SCI. “Short of alternatives, many patients spend lakhs on the therapy. The failure to get any significant improvement makes them depressed and uninterested in conventional treatment even,” the ISIC director said. He is the primary contributor to the position statement published in the European journal. Other authors include Geeta Jotwani from the **Indian Council of Medical Research**, Gourie Devi from Institute of Human Behaviour

And Allied Sciences, S L Yadav from AIIMS and Susan Charlifue from Craig hospital in USA. The experts have opined that to stop the malpractice of marketing such 'unproven' therapies to a vulnerable population, it is crucial that all countries unite to form common, well-defined regulations or legislation on their use in SCI cases.



### **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare directs compulsory screening for diseases in schools**

May 21, 2019/Hindustan Times

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has instructed state health departments to increase screening camps for students at schools. Letters were sent out to state departments last week, post the findings of **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** on increased burden of non communicable diseases in every state.

“Looking at the findings of ICMR, we have found out that rate of lifestyle diseases among the population has increased. The ministry has alerted the states to up their screenings and awareness programmes, stress on physical activities and screening camps for students at school has been suggested,” said Rajeev Kumar, director, noncommunicable diseases, MoHFW. Dr Anup Kumar Yadava, the state’s national health mission, commissioner, said, “Preventive methods too will be stressed as directed by the MoHFW where students will be encouraged to take up yoga and sports to build strong immune system. Poor lifestyle among people and children who can be seen with less physical activity and poor diet is one of the causes.” The letter also asks the states to conduct yoga sessions in schools, and to keep a check on tobacco-free zones around the premises. According to the ICMR’s research findings, published in September 2018, cases of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, cancer and suicidal tendencies have shot up in every state. Prevalence of ischemic heart disease and stroke has increased by 50 per cent from 1990 to 2016 and the number of people with diabetes has gone up from 26 million in 1990 to 65 million in 2016. Rate of cancers along with suicide too has doubled from 1990 to 2016.

### **‘Ischemic disease leading cause of heart failure’**

May 22, 2019/The New Indian Express

The National Heart Failure Registry (NHFR), which is expected to examine the reasons behind heart failure and the policy interventions needed to contain the same, has come out with its first clinical findings. It is the ischemic heart disease which is the leading cause of heart failure. In the case of the comorbid condition, it is hypertension that tops the list. The initial findings of the study are based on the analysis conducted on 1,000 patients from various parts of the country. The data has been consolidated by Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), which is the national coordinator in the preparation of NHFR. “NHFR supported by the **Indian Council of Medical Research** is conducted on 52 hospitals spreading across 23 states. More than 4,000 patients have enrolled so far. The analysis of first 1,000 patients has now been released,” said Dr Harikrishnan S, Professor of Cardiology at SCTIMST, who is also the principal investigator of NHFR.

Some of the findings:

Dilated cardiomyopathy and rheumatic heart disease were the other two leading reasons for heart failure. In the case of comorbid conditions other than that of hypertension, diabetes and tobacco use also top the list.

## [Pulwama, Shopian, Kulgam have the highest occurrence of cancers in Kashmir](#)



May 26, 2019/Greater Kashmir

Incidence of cancer in Kashmir appears higher in three southern Kashmir districts of Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam, according to the cancer register of Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences. The three districts have accounted for 20 percent of all cancer cases in Kashmir during the last five years, with higher number of affected patients per lakh of population reported from there. Official data from SKIMS reveals that between 2014 and 2018, 20129 cancer cases were registered with the regional cancer center of the tertiary healthcare centre from 10 districts of Kashmir. Of these, 3945 (19.5%) cases belonged to Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam. This amounts to 20 percent of all cancer patients for 18 percent population of Kashmir. The population of three districts is 12.5 lakh souls, while Kashmir, as per Census 2011, has a population of about 70 lakh. Prof Mohammad said that some studies have pointed towards pesticide use in these horticulture based districts as a contributing risk factor. While stressing the role of location of district and its distance from SKIMS as one of the factors that governed cancer detection, he said, “A lot of people from far flung areas are diagnosed very late and are also unable to follow-up on treatment.” Prof Mohammad Maqbool Lone, head department of radiation oncology at SKIMS said that the Institute was compiling data for population-based cancer registry, allocated for by **Indian Council of Medical Research** last year. “In a year, we will have the exact number of cancer patients from each district,” Prof Lone said, expressing concern over the lack of measures for early screening of cancer among people living in the peripheries. “We need to intensify efforts to ensure that cancers are diagnosed earlier for a better treatment outcome.”

## [ICMR head Balram Bhargava wins Dr. Lee Jong-wook Prize for Public Health](#)

May 26, 2019/The Hindu

“When I work with patients, I think about how to apply science to alleviate their suffering. This gives meaning to everything else I do,” said Director General of the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** Professor Balram Bhargava after jointly winning the 2019 Dr Lee Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health at the 72nd World Health Assembly in Geneva earlier this week. He bagged the award for his achievements as a clinician, innovator, researcher and trainer. On the health facilities in India, he said there were facilities where only the richest could step in. “I would never wish to work in a place like that. I did not study medicine to make money! I did it to help people. Indians do not need to go abroad for treatment — we have the health solutions here,” he affirms. “Unfortunately, they are not accessible for everyone. This is a huge unfinished agenda that policy makers must address,” said the physician. “A doctor treats only one patient at a time. A researcher helps larger groups, as his knowledge and innovation can spread to many patients. A policy maker brings it all one step farther when taking decisions to ensure that the whole population of the country benefits,” he said. On his goal and the way forward after winning this prestigious award, he said: “I was 14 years old when my father had a heart attack that was when I decided to become a doctor. Ever since, my goal in life has been to treat people and the goal remains my driving force.”

## ICMR Director Dr Balram Bhargava conferred with Dr Lee Jong wook Memorial Prize for Public Health



May 27, 2019/Medical Dialogues

New Delhi: Professor Dr Balram Bhargava, a renowned cardiologist is the winner of the 2019 Dr Lee Jong wook Memorial Prize for Public Health for his achievements as a clinician, innovator, researcher and trainer.

Dr Balram Bhargava is the Secretary, Department of Health Research, (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare), Government of India and Director General, **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**

Dr Bhargava is Professor of Cardiology at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi and also serves as the Executive Director for Stanford India Biodesign Centre, School of International Biodesign (SiB). Dr Bhargava is an outstanding cardiologist, one of the foremost leaders in biomedical innovation, public health, medical education and medical research.

“A doctor treats only one patient at a time. A researcher helps larger groups, as his knowledge and innovation can spread to many patients. A policymaker brings it all one step farther when taking decisions to ensure that the whole population of the country benefits,” he says. Professor Bhargava has a strong desire to reach vulnerable people. For instance, he led a big study of the cardiovascular health of bus drivers in New Delhi. “It was so obvious we needed to look into the health needs of those young men whose work conditions are tough – heat, crowded vehicles, polluted air,” he says. When the researchers captured the pattern of hypertension and other heart health risks, they found the bus drivers were at much higher risk than average for people of their age. This research led to action to address these health risks.

## Promoting organic pulses

May 28, 2019/Daily Excelsior

“An organic farmer is the best peacemaker today, because there is more violence, more death, more destruction, more wars, through a violent industrial agricultural system. And to shift away from that into an agriculture of peace is what organic farming is doing.” – Vandana Shiva Pulses are the main source of protein particularly for vegetarians. As per **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** 70gm/day is prescribed which is much higher than the available quantity which is 32gm/day (Anony, 2014). Presently, India ranks 103/130 in Global Hunger Index as per The Global Human Capital Report, World Economic Forum that means India still lacks in nutritional sufficiency. Mash being a legume crop itself makes soil healthier and it is being grown in sub-tropics of Jammu. Here, a majority of population grow it naturally for personal consumption as they are aware of harmful effects of insecticides, weedicides etc. So Jammu state can easily switch to organic mash production and according to an independent data collection study, farmers want to grow it more organically if provided with the assistance which will also leads to zero soil, human and animal health degradation, unlike degradation happened in Punjab. Organic agriculture is need of the era to combat with the nutritional hunger. Mash (Blackgram) i.e Maah ki daal, is a rich source of protein containing 20-25% i.e. double the amount of proteins compared to cereals and also known as the poor man’s meat along with other pulses. Mash also has medicinal properties like curbing diabetes, nervous disorders, hair disorders, digestive system and rheumatic affiliations.

## CMCH team presents papers on stroke in Italy

May 29, 2019/The Times of India



The stroke research team members of Christian Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) Ludhiana presented high quality research papers at the European Stroke Congress held in Milan (Italy) from May 21 to 24. Dr Jeyaraj D Pandian, principal and professor of Neurology, said the CMCH stroke research team had been conducting large-scale research projects and stroke trials, funded by many national and international agencies. Dr Dorcas Gandhi, associate professor of Physiotherapy, was awarded 'Young Investigator Travel Grant' for her work on computer game-based stroke rehabilitation. Dr Ivy Sebastian (senior registrar) received the 'Young Investigator Travel Award' in Tezpur (Assam) for her research work in genetics on conventional and dietary risk factors of primary intra-cerebral haemorrhage in Tezpur, Assam. National coordinator Dr Shweta Jain presented the Indian Stroke Clinical Trial Network (Instruct) — a network of 25 stroke centres in the country. Instruct principal investigator Dr Pandian said it was a flagship project funded by **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** to carry out stroke clinical trials relevant to the nation. National coordinator Dr Deepti Arora discussed the ongoing stroke trial Secondary Prevention By Structured Semi-Interactive Stroke Prevention Package in India (Sprint India) which has recruited 1,300 patients so far from 25 stroke centres in India. Dr Pandian delivered an invited lecture about low-cost stroke rehabilitation. He also participated in the World Stroke Organisation (WSO) strategic planning meeting, and also the executive committee meeting in his capacity as WSO vice-president.

## Risk factors that can lead to cardiovascular ailments in youth

May 29, 2019/The Health Site

Heart-related problems are usually associated with elderly people. However, there has been a surge in the number of youths getting affected by cardiovascular ailments. According to a recent report by **Indian Council of Medical Research**, the occurrence of heart-related issues has increased by more than 50 per cent from 1990 to 2016. The council further said that cardiovascular ailments account for 17 per cent of all the deaths in the country. The authors of the report also said that another worrying trend in India is that heart attack incidents are rapidly increasing among youths (aged between 25-40). As per the findings of the report, this is happening because of the unhealthy lifestyle habits among young adults that is the main culprit behind this trend. The experts in the field of cardiology are of the opinion that there is an urgent need to educate the younger in order to bring down these alarming numbers in the country. Here, we tell you about the risk factors that can lead to cardiovascular ailments. sedentary lifestyle: People under the age of 30 who tend to spend the majority of their day sitting idle in front of a computer are more likely to develop cardiovascular diseases as compared to those who follow an active lifestyle.

Smoking: Smoking is a habit that is increasing in kids and youth at a rapid pace. College students and office goers are often seen lighting up a cigarette on daily basis. Smoking affects your arteries and impairs the blood flow that can cause a heart attack.

## ICMR to spread Gandhi's healthy habits in schools

May 29, 2019/Millennium Post



New Delhi: In a move aimed at making India a lifestyle based disease-free country, the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, a research arm of the Health Ministry, has decided to roll out a pilot project to propagate the Gandhian philosophy of health among children in schools. The prime objective of the project, which is the brainchild of ICMR DG Balram Bhargava, is to make the future generation of the country fit by educating children about healthy habits of Gandhi through different means of communication. It would also help to put a check on life-taking life-style based diseases, which have added to the disease burden of the country. The ICMR has roped in Delhi-based National Gandhi Museum (NGM) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to propagate teachings of Gandhi among schoolchildren. The pilot project would be first launched in July in about 80 schools of the national capital and after its success; it would be introduced in other parts of the country. Explaining about the operational part of the project, a senior ICMR official said, "The drive is about reaching out to young kids who are the future generation of the country. The lifestyle diseases are increasing like anything as if the situation remains the same, it would be very difficult to control life-taking diseases. The project would help in educating children about all the good habits of Gandhi."

"Besides showing movies on Gandhi's healthy habits, three experts – one from Gandhi Museum, one ICMR official and one medical practitioner --- would also visit every school and brief students in detail about the secrets of Gandhi's health. School kids would be taught about the teachings of Gandhi to remain fit and healthy throughout their life as Gandhi did," the official said. The official further said, "Children are aware of Gandhi's role in the freedom struggle, but they hardly know about Gandhi's healthy habits such as practising yoga, meditation, involvement in physical activities, etc."

## Stuck in the middle

May 30, 2019/Deccan Chronicle

A recent study by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** shows that physical inactivity is very common in India. Around 54.4 percent people were found inactive during this study. With only 10 per cent of people actually indulging in recreational physical activity the other majority seems to succumb to the perils of a sedentary lifestyle. We speak to Bengalureans to understand what they do to combat these perils. Working towards a healthy lifestyle while leading a fast paced life is extremely difficult. However, youngsters manage to include a bit of exercise in their daily chores and convert it into a habit than a liability. Nivedita Hiremath, a senior software engineer with a leading software firm says, "I've learned that we can't take our health for granted. I faced major health issues in the past years due to the continuous seated postures at work. The first indication was when I couldn't lift my arm and was in tremendous pain and it radiated to other parts of the body. After an x-ray the doctor said my seat ergonomics aren't right and I had to take proper measures. I realised I had to take this seriously and hence decided to walk in the mornings and do a bit of yoga. I recently visited an ophthalmologist because of the bad headache I was developing every day, she advised me the 20 minutes rule. Giving us a simple exercise to practice while at our desks is Amy Davidson, a yoga trainer for over a decade, "The continuous pressure on our gluteal muscles from sitting almost all the time can lead them to lose both their strength and tone. Fret

not as there are exercises to fix issues in every part of your body in this case to strengthen the gluteal muscles, while sitting on your chair you have to just push your heels into the floor as like digging them into the ground and simultaneously squeeze your butt very hard by contracting or simply pulling your tailbone in for five seconds. Relax for five seconds and repeat the same exercise for 10 to 20 times in a day.”



### [Health Ministry Put Checks on Publishing or Discussing Research on E-Cigarettes](#)

May 30, 2019/The Wire

**New Delhi:** The Union health ministry issued a circular earlier this month, cautioning other government departments, to hold off on publishing any research, reports or studies on e-cigarettes and other devices which release nicotine – posed as an alternative to tobacco addiction – without prior consultation of the ministry. They also suggest prior consultation for any workshops or events which other government departments may want to hold on e-cigarettes. However, the **Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR)** is scheduled to release a “white paper” tomorrow about this subject, on account of ‘World No Tobacco Day’. Scientists at ICMR have done a study of around 100 research papers on electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) to collate what evidence currently is claimed, on its pros and cons. A source in the health ministry said that this recent circular was issued because government departments within the health ministry have diverged from the its public position on tobacco control in the past. In August 2018, the health ministry put out a public advisory saying that nicotine devices are a “great health risk to public at large”. “We are not telling departments not to do research. We are saying just keep health ministry informed so that there is no confusion on the government’s position,” said a health ministry official.

With regards,

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