



## **INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH**

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

**Media report (23 February to 8 March 2019)**  
**(ICMR IN NEWS)**

**(Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi)**  
Information Interface Officer

## **HEADLINES** (As it is)



### **Worms in belly cause malnutrition, hit brain**

February 23, 2019/The Times of India

### **MCI secretary general resigns, new 'acting' head appointed**

February 23, 2019/Daijiworld

### **Inside India's largest cancer hospital**

February 24, 2019/The Times of India

### **Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory at SVIMS upgraded to State-level**

February 24, 2019/Hans India

### **Explained: The cancer crisis in India**

February 24, 2019/The Times of India

### **Mobile app helps improve services of frontline village health workers**

February 24, 2019/The Week

### **Centre set to recognise acupuncture as system of medicine**

February 24, 2019/The New Indian Express

### **आईसीएमआर की स्वास्थ्य सेवा सुधार पर बैठक**

25 फरवरी, 2019/अमर उजाला

### **India losing out on clinical trials raises health worries**

February 26, 2019/Live Mint

### **Swadeshi Jagaran Manch expresses concern over ICMR-Pfizer collaboration**

February 26, 2019/The Times of India

### **RSS frontal org blasts health ministry for collaboration with pharma giant**

February 26, 2019/The Week

### **LUO CALLS FOR INDIA PARTNERSHIP**

February 26, 2019/znbc.com



**Prof Luo meets India's Apex medical science research Gurus**

February 26, 2019/The Independent Observer

**Zambia and India negotiate development partnerships**

February 26, 2019/African Daily Voice

**Pune region to get dedicated centre to handle infectious disease**

February 27, 2019/Hindustan Times

**North India may record 15,000 swine flu cases by February-end**

February 28, 2019/Hindustan Times

**Panel to review if Sun Pharma, Meril Life merit price cap relief**

March 4, 2019/Live Mint

**In 8 of 10 persons with head injuries 'golden hour' lost in transit: SKIMS study**

March 5, 2019/Greater Kashmir

**Bhopal: 8 test positive for HINI, four critical**

March 5, 2019/The Times of India

**4 tips to reduce the risk of colon cancer**

March 6, 2019/The Health Site

**ICMR launches IndiCleft tool**

March 7, 2019/Bio Spectrum

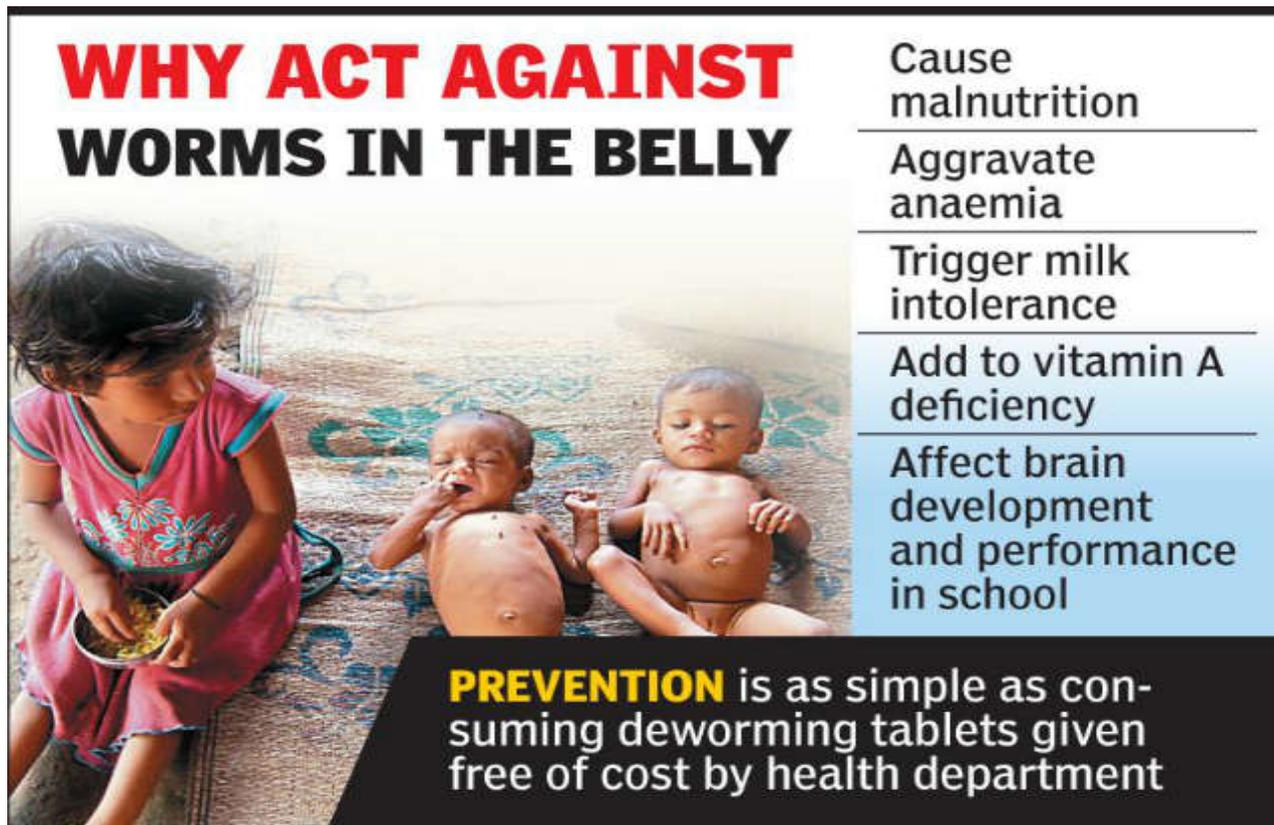
**Rural health and research unit to be set up in Durg**

March 8, 2019/The Pioneer

**Worms in belly cause malnutrition, hit brain**

February 23, 2019/The Times of India

LUCKNOW: Over 40% of 22 crore kids and teens with worms in their stomach in India are from Uttar Pradesh, reveals a state health department data. This translates into over 9.5 crore children in the 1-19 age-group in UP. Ahead of national deworming day on February 25, health officials said worms in the stomach were responsible for almost one third of total malnutrition in UP.



**WHY ACT AGAINST WORMS IN THE BELLY**

- Cause malnutrition
- Aggravate anaemia
- Trigger milk intolerance
- Add to vitamin A deficiency
- Affect brain development and performance in school

**PREVENTION** is as simple as consuming deworming tablets given free of cost by health department

“Global studies show worms in the stomach trigger malnutrition,” said Dr Manoj Shukul, general manager, adolescent health, National health Mission, UP.

Citing global studies, experts said round worms (acaris lumbricoides) affect body’s ability to absorb fat and protein, besides worsening deficiency of Vitamin A and aggravating milk intolerance. Another study showed over 38% schoolchildren with worms in stomach were underweight while 58% were weaker than other kids of their age. Several African studies have noted the risk of malnutrition increases with each year of growth. As per an **Indian Council of Medical Research**, National Institute of Epidemiology study, prevalence of round worms in UP was found to be 70% while another 22% carried hook worms in their stomach. Around 4% children were found to be carrying whip worm (Trichuris Trichiura). Informing that worms also affect a child’s performance in school, they said these tend to affect brain development. “Different aspects of cognitive development are affected as worms tend to aggravate iron deficiency and deprives the brain of necessary micronutrients,” they noted.

## MCI secretary general resigns, new 'acting' head appointed

February 23, 2019/Daijiworld

Medical Council of India (MCI) Sanjay Srivastava has resigned from the post although the health and family welfare ministry has not issued any clarification on the step. MCI, which is the the apex body that regulated medical education in the country, on its website had last updated the page on February 19 which has mentioned Prof. Siddarth Ramji taking over as the Acting Secretary General.

A former deputy director general at the directorate general of health services (DGHS) Shrivastava, has been appointed the secretary general to assist the Board of Governance (BOG) last year which was formed by the government through an ordinance. The seven members in the BoG include three doctors from the AIIMS- Dr VK Paul (former HoD paediatrics and current member, Niti Aayog), Dr Randeep Guleria (director) and Dr Nikhil Tandon (professor endocrinology).

There are two other doctors -- Dr Jagat Ram (director-PGI Chandigarh) and Dr BN Gangadhar (director- National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences) -- and two ex officio members - Dr S Venkatesh (Director General of Health Services) and Dr Balram Bhargava (Director General- **Indian Council of Medical Research**).

Despite multiple approaches to Paul, Dr Tandon and S. Venkatesh, none of the BoG members were ready to speak on the matter.

## Inside India's largest cancer hospital

February 24, 2019/The Times of India

I am a teacher, I like to talk, give lectures. So you have no choice but to listen to me. I hope you don't mind," says Professor G K Rath to a group of cancer researchers from the US who have come to meet him, in his chamber at Dr B R Ambedkar Institute Rotary Cancer Hospital at AIIMS in New Delhi.

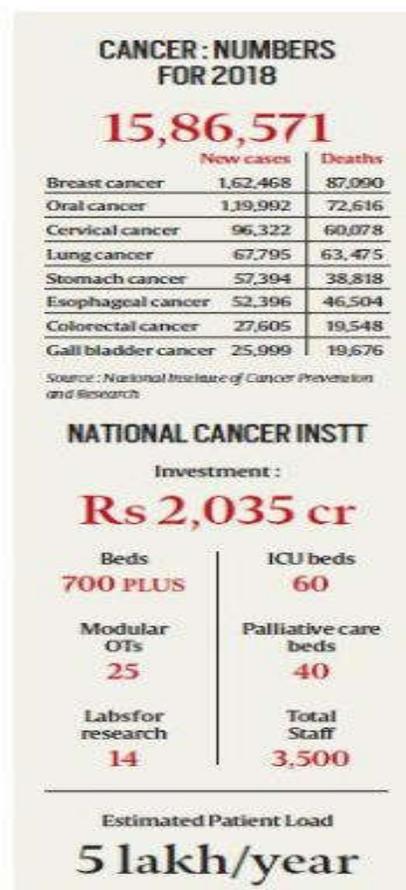
What he says next grabs their attention. Zooming in on a slide on his computer, Rath says, "This is our Manhattan Project."

"Your Manhattan Project?" asks a surprised guest.

Rath, the head of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), India's largest cancer hospital, beams. "The US and its allies started research on nuclear bombs in 1939 and, by World War II, they were ready with one. That was your Manhattan Project. This 70-acre land I'm showing you, that is where our Manhattan Project will begin."

If that Manhattan Project hastened the end of WWII, this too will help India fight a war, the one against cancer, the professor asserts.

As per the **Indian Council of Medical Research**, India will have over 17.3 lakh cancer cases by 2020 — a doubling of cases in 25 years. It may see over 8.8 lakh deaths due to the disease, with only 12.5 per cent of the patients receiving treatment in early stages.



## Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory at SVIMS upgraded to State-level



February 24, 2019/Hans India

Tirupati: Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences (SVIMS) has made two major announcements at its first Annual Research cum Alumni Day. The Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (VRDL) of SVIMS has been upgraded to State level by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** that sponsor it.

Dr AK Bagga of ICMR has announced the upgradation of the lab which was being operated at SVIMS for the last two years. Another important announcement was the signing of MoU between SVIMS and IISER (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research) who work together in the areas of medical and biological disciplines.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Bagga said that within a few years of inception of medical college laboratory which is a wing of virology network, SVIMS VRDL has functioned in the capacity of State-level laboratory and now it has been upgraded to the State level. The lab will now cater to the needs of people on a larger scale and more outcomes can be generated. He congratulated the Director-cum-Vice-Chancellor Dr T S Ravikumar for this achievement and appreciated the contributions of Principal Investigator of VRDL, Dr Usha Kalawat.

The MoU between SVIMS and IISER will bring together the two leading scientific institutions of Tirupati in their endeavour to promote pedagogy and research particularly in medical and biological disciplines. It was signed by Prof Ravikumar and IISER Director Prof KN Ganesh.

## Explained: The cancer crisis in India

February 24, 2019/The Times of India

With cancer being India's second biggest killer after heart disease, the nation is staring at a cancer crisis, with unequipped hospitals, spiralling cost of treatment, belated diagnosis and the doctor-patient ratio gap all causing large-scale problems. However, to lessen the deficit of tertiary cancer care in the country, India's biggest cancer hospital is coming up at Haryana's Jhajjar, which will have over 700 beds exclusively for cancer patients.

The National Cancer Institute, being built at a cost of Rs 2,035 crore, is slated to be completed by December 2020 and most importantly, like at AIIMS, Delhi, most of the treatment and procedures would be free.

As per **Indian Council of Medical Research data**, India will have over 17.3 lakh cancer cases by 2020 — a doubling of cases in 25 years. It may see over 8.8 lakh deaths due to the disease, with only 12.5 per cent of the patients receiving treatment in early stages.

Compared with 1990, cancer has killed more than double the number of people in 2016. The ICMR's quarter-century study of cancer has found that while 3.82 lakh people had died of cancer in 1990, the number jumped to 8.13 lakh in 2016, a rise of 53 per cent. The numbers seem staggering especially at a time when the country is facing a shortage of cancer specialists, with only 2,000 oncologists to look after around 10 million patients, according to the latest government data.

Even there is a dearth of medical specialists in India, the gap in the number of oncologists, experts say, is relatively bigger and India has a challenging task on its hands if it needs to meet the optimum of one cancer specialist for every 1,00,000 population.

## [Mobile app helps improve services of frontline village health workers](#)



February 24, 2019/The Week

New Delhi, Feb 24 (PTI) A mobile phone application for community health workers has helped improved their performance in Gujarat, with a government study finding that 80 per cent of maternal and infant deaths can be prevented by improving coverage and quality of evidence-based health services provided by health workers. A randomized study conducted in Gujarat between 2013 and 2018 found that a new mobile phone application called ImTeCHO (Innovative Mobile-phone Technology for Community Health Operators) as job-aid for frontline village health workers called ASHAs can help improve coverage of health services and health outcomes. Developed in 2013, the mobile application is aimed at improving performance of ASHAs through better supervision and support for reducing maternal and infant mortality. ImTeCHO helps them deliver maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) care services and record data under better supervision. The application provides accredited social health activists (ASHAs) with their daily schedules along with reminders of steps to carry out during their visits. The collected data and services offered are tracked. The study was done by voluntary organization SEWA Rural in active partnership with Gujarat government and IT partner-(Argusoft India Ltd), **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, World Health Organization (WHO) and MacArthur Foundation provided technical inputs and funding for the study. Dr Pankaj Shah, principal investigator of the study, said the study used the best possible and robust randomized design to examine effect of the mobile app. "This is first randomized study globally which proved the effectiveness of a mobile phone application for frontline health workers in government-run system throughout continuum of care in difficult to reach tribal areas," he said.

## [Centre set to recognise acupuncture as system of medicine](#)

February 24, 2019/The New Indian Express

NEW DELHI: Acupuncture — the Chinese method of curing diseases by piercing the body with needles — is set to get the government's stamp as an independent system of medicine in India. A 10-member committee, headed by a former director general of the **Indian Council for Medical Research**, has been formed to promote and regulate the alternative therapy, which many practitioners of modern medicine view sceptically due to lack of sufficient scientific evidence. The committee, headed by V M Katoch, has been given three months to come up with suggestions, after which acupuncture may be taught at government and private institutions at the Bachelor and Masters levels. At present, very few institutes offer certificate courses in the therapy, which is practised by nearly 70,000 people in India, most of them quacks. Permission to practise acupuncture in the country was given in 2003, and an inter-departmental panel formed in 2016 to identify viable new systems of medicine had recommended it for further promotion, along with six-or-seven other forms of therapy, according to an order by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issued on Thursday. "Acupuncture... can be accepted as an independent system of healthcare for the indications for which there is evidence, and expertise exists for teaching, training and certification," the order said.

*'To be on a par with allopathy'*

"The recognition would mean acupuncture would be treated on a par with allopathy, homeopathy, Ayurveda, Unani and Sidhha," said Raman Kapur, vice-chairman of the committee to promote and regulate acupuncture in India

## आईसीएमआर की स्वास्थ्य सेवा सुधार पर बैठक

25 फरवरी, 2019/अमर उजाला



नई दिल्ली। आयुर्विज्ञान अनुसंधान परिषद ने आईसीएमआर-डब्ल्यूएचओ (विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन) की कार्यान्वयन अनुसंधान परियोजना आशाकर्मियों द्वारा मातृत्व नवजात स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं के कवरेज में सुधार के लिए एम स्वास्थ्य हस्तक्षेप इमटेकों के परिणामों को प्रसारित करने के लिए एक बैठक का आयोजन किया। इस अवसर पर गैर सरकारी संगठन सेवा ग्रामीण की परियोजना को संचालित करने वाले पदाधिकारी तथा विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन, स्वास्थ्य एवं अनुसंधान संगठन मंत्रालय के पदाधिकारी उपस्थित थे। जैव प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग के पूर्व सचिव डॉ एम. के. भान ने बैठक की अध्यक्षता की और महत्वपूर्ण अनुसंधान परिणामों के आदान-प्रदान के लिए एक मंच निर्माण की वकालत की, ताकि ऐसी परियोजनाओं को अन्य राज्यों में बढ़ाया जा सके।

### India losing out on clinical trials raises health worries

February 26, 2019/Live Mint

NEW DELHI: The number of clinical trials being held in India as a proportion of global trials is falling, prompting experts to express concerns over the health implications of this decline. The percentage of clinical trials in India has come down from 1.5% as of February 2017 to 1.2% now, according to the latest data from the United States National Library of Medicine's database of global clinical studies.

As on 13 February, 297,101 clinical trials had been conducted in past one year, out of which India is engaged in only 3,618 (1.2%) trials. This despite the fact that the country has 18% of the world's population and 20% of the global disease burden.

Public health experts claimed that this number is inadequate considering the burgeoning healthcare requirements of India. In fact, they say, more clinical research is needed to develop new and effective medicines and vaccines to tackle its mammoth disease burden and unmet medical needs. "The changing profile of diseases affecting the Indian population, the continuing high prevalence of endemic diseases and the emergence of lifestyle diseases all point to an urgent need for greater investment in research and innovation to address India's increasing disease burden and the incremental costs associated with it," said Chirag Trivedi, president, Indian Society for Clinical Research (ISCR).

In July 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) told the health ministry that with its stringent rules, India will not get sufficient global attention for clinical research. "It is extremely unfortunate that India is lagging behind in clinical trials. However, serious efforts are underway to initiate new strategies to smoothen the hurdles faced by investigators by national organizations, including the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and the Drug Controller of India (DGCI)," said Ravi Mehrotra, director, ICMR-National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research of the Department of Health Research.



## [Swadeshi Jagaran Manch expresses concern over ICMR-Pfizer collaboration](#)

February 26, 2019/The Times of India

NEW DELHI: Swadeshi Jagran Manch, the economic wing of the RSS has written to the health minister expressing concern over the conflict of interest in the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** collaborating with the multinational pharma company, Pfizer for a project on anti-microbial resistance (AMR). SJM urged the minister to cancel the collaboration on an urgent basis and investigate the circumstances that led to such "an unethical" tie-up. While acknowledging that industry is an important stakeholder in the global efforts to tackle AMR, the SJM letter stated that industry support for AMR activities should be in the form of "unrestricted educational grant, with multiple companies providing grants to a common pool" as recommended by the WHO in its document on public-private partnerships. "To eliminate or at least reduce COI (Conflicts of Interests), no single company can be selected as a partner to a specific AMR related educational or surveillance activity," added the letter. The SJM has also demanded that all members of the ICMR-AMR committee and others involved in the surveillance and educational activities of the network, whenever there is a direct or indirect industry involvement, must disclose conflict of interest in the WHO COI disclosure format.

"Lack of transparency in the activities of the AMR division of ICMR, is the reason behind the inefficient utilization of public funds. The unethical collaboration with Pfizer is also a result of this lack of transparency," said Ashwani Mahajan of SJM. Pointing out that there was no fund crunch for the AMR project, SJM questioned why the funds and collaboration with Pfizer were required and pointed out that no selection process had been followed to choose Pfizer for collaboration.

## [RSS frontal org blasts health ministry for collaboration with pharma giant](#)

February 26, 2019/The Week

A collaboration between a government body and a pharma giant has triggered the ire of an RSS-frontal organisation. The Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has written to the Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda pointing out the apparent "conflict of interest" in a project run by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** to combat anti-microbial resistance (AMR), that is being funded by the pharma giant Pfizer. AMR is defined as the resistance of a microorganism to an antimicrobial drug that was originally effective for treatment of infections caused by it. A recent report by the Centre for Disease Dynamics, Economics and Policy suggests that, in India, over 50,000 children die due to antibiotic resistant infections. Very few new antibiotics are in the pipeline, and hence it is important to use the existing drugs judiciously, experts say. A big reason for the rise of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is the inappropriate use of antibiotics, which is rampant in India. Most hospitals in India don't follow the process while prescribing it, to prevent anti-microbial resistance (AMR), according to the ICMR. Such treatment failures also lead to longer periods of infectivity, increasing the number of infected people in the community. This, in turn, exposes the general population to the risk of contracting a resistant strain of microorganisms. "As they become resistant to first-line antimicrobials, the forbidding high cost of the second-line drugs may result in failure to treat these diseases," according to the ICMR's guidelines that were released for hospitals across the country, last year. "The guidelines include detailed instructions on drug selection, dosage and duration for anti-microbial drugs, especially inside ICUs.

## [LUO CALLS FOR INDIA PARTNERSHIP](#)

February 26, 2019/zNBC.com



Higher Education Minister Nkandu Luo has called for partnership with India in human capital development, scientific research and exchange programmes. Professor Luo says India has invested heavily in science and technology which Zambia can use to benchmark. Professor Luo was speaking in New Delhi, India, when she conferred with the **Indian Council of Medical Research** Director General Balram Bhargava. The Minister said Zambia is looking forward to signing a Memorandum of Understanding -MoU with India because the country has lost a lot of lives due to HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and cholera as well as non-communicable diseases. She has since urged the Indian top research and development institute to work with Zambia's High Commissioner to India Judith Kapijimpanga in expeditiously working towards an MoU. And Indian Council of Medical Research director general Professor Balram Bhargava said his institution will move with speed to work with Zambia especially in HIV and AIDS and malaria research. Prof. Luo was in India to speak at an Educational Research and Development Summit.

## [Prof Luo meets India's Apex medical science research Gurus](#)

February 26, 2019/The Independent Observer

*Higher Education Minister Prof Nkandu Luo has called for partnership with India in human capital development, scientific research and exchange programmes.*

Prof Luo said India has invested heavily in science and technology which Zambia can benchmark from. She was speaking in New Delhi, India, when she conferred with the **Indian Council of Medical Research** Director General Balram Bhargava.

"Zambia is looking forward to signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with India because the Country has lost a lot of lives due to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and cholera as well as non communicable diseases," she said.

She explained that Zambia was willing to work with India in research activities to improve the quality of lives of the people. "The other areas of collaboration to include student and staff exchange programmes, human capital development and activities around universal health coverage," Prof. Luo said. She had since urged the Indian top medical research and development institute to work with Zambia's High Commissioner to India Judith Kapijimpanga in expeditiously working towards an MoU. And Indian Council of Medical Research Director General Prof. Balram Bhargava said his organisation had clocked one hundred years of guiding the Government of India in policy direction through its 26 research institutes.

"My institution will move with speed to work with Zambia especially in HIV/AIDS and malaria research," Prof. Bhargava said. He said his institution had also done a lot of research in elephantiasis. Prof. Luo was in India to speak at an Educational Research and Development summit in Hyderabad. This is contained in a statement made available by First Secretary Press and Tourism at the Zambian Mission in New Delhi, India, Bangwe Naviley.

## Zambia and India negotiate development partnerships

February 26, 2019/African Daily Voice



Johannesburg, South Africa (ADV) – The Zambian Higher Education Minister, Professor Nkandu Luo recently disclosed that his country is keen to partner with India in human capital development, scientific research and exchange programmes. Zambia's interest also includes areas like student and staff exchange programmes, human capital development and activities around universal health coverage. This was revealed after the Minister's meeting with the **Indian Council of Medical Research** Director General, Balram Bhargava, in New Delhi, India after attending the Educational Research and Development summit. "The Country has lost a lot of lives due to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and cholera as well as non-communicable diseases," said Professor Luo, urging the Indian top medical research and development institute to work with Zambia's High Commissioner to India Judith Kapijimpanga in expeditiously working towards the MoU. "India has invested heavily in science and technology which Zambia can benchmark from," added the Minister.

Indian Council of Medical Research Director General, Professor Balram Bhargava, made a promise that his institution would move with speed to work with Zambia especially in HIV/AIDS and malaria research.

## Pune region to get dedicated centre to handle infectious disease

February 27, 2019/Hindustan Times

The national institute of virology (NIV) Pune has proposed a new regional centre dedicated to handling outbreaks of infectious diseases in Pune.

The proposed centre will be set up within the premises of Dr Naidu hospital for infectious diseases, Sangamwadi and will consist of not only isolation wards but also pre-isolation wards, as well as developed critical treatment units or intensive critical units (ICU).

The centre will cover Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), Pune cantonment board, Khadki cantonment board and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC).

Dr Mandeep Chadha, deputy director of NIV Pune said, "The idea is to handle and treat outbreaks and new emerging diseases with state-of-the-art infrastructure. NIV will guide health department officials in developing wards, setting up infrastructure and purchasing the right kind of equipment."

Sanjeev Wavre, assistant health officer, PMC said, "So far we have held two meetings with NIV officials. The next meeting is scheduled for March 2 where the developmental plan of the centre will be discussed. Naidu hospital was selected as it has a history of tackling epidemics such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARs) and H1N1 influenza."

Dr RR Gangakhedkar, head of epidemic and communicable diseases, **Indian council of medical research**, including NIV, said, "The possibility of an outbreak is higher during monsoon, and hence it is good to be well prepared. The initiative will prove beneficial for the people of Pune and periphery."

## North India may record 15,000 swine flu cases by February-end

February 28, 2019/Hindustan Times

North India continues to be in the grips of seasonal flu, with H1N1 (swine flu) cases likely to cross 15,000 by the end of February, which is more than the 14,992 cases confirmed in the entire year in 2018. The National Centre for Disease Control has reported 14,803 confirmed cases across states till February 24, with 448 deaths. This is less than half the 1,103 deaths confirmed in all of 2018.

“There has been no change in the strain of the H1N1 virus in circulation. The number of cases reported this year is higher mainly because of two reasons: prolonged winters; and more people getting tested because of higher awareness,” said Dr Ekta Gupta, additional professor of virology, Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS). With 3,964 cases and 137 deaths, Rajasthan reported the most cases and deaths, followed by Delhi with 2,738 cases and seven deaths. In Delhi, 460 of the total cases were reported this week, which is lower than the 609 cases that were reported last week. While Gujarat is a close third in terms of number of cases with 2,726, in the number of deaths, 88, it is the second highest after Rajasthan. Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have higher death rates, with 43 of the 199 people who tested positive for H1N1 dying in MP, and HP recording 256 cases and 32 deaths. “H1N1 is the predominant strain that is causing 70%-90% of seasonal flu infections. Usually, there is an increase in the number of cases reported when the structure of the virus changes and people have no immunity against it. We haven’t observed that. The other reason could be an increase in the pool of un-immunised people, due to migrations and new births,” said Dr Nivedita Gupta, senior scientist, **Indian Council of Medical Research**. India experiences a second peak of seasonal flu infections during the monsoons. “In India, especially north India, seasonal influenza peaks during the monsoons and in the winter months. But it has been observed that if the numbers are high during the one peak, the numbers are lower in the next. This is because most of the population gains immunity when there is a spurt in infections,” said Dr Nivedita Gupta.

## Panel to review if Sun Pharma, Meril Life merit price cap relief

March 4, 2019/Live Mint

A plea by drug maker Sun Pharmaceuticals Industries Ltd and medical devices maker Meril Life Sciences Pvt. Ltd to seek a rare exemption from government-set price caps for two products has failed to find favour with India’s drug pricing regulator. Mumbai-based Sun Pharmaceuticals is seeking an exemption for its anti-cancer gemcitabine hydrochloride injection while Gujarat-based Meril Life Sciences wants a similar exemption for its first locally made biodegradable cardiac scaffold, a naturally dissolving stent that clears blockages in arteries. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), in a meeting on 21 February, has referred the matter to an overarching expert committee headed by the director-general of **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** to see if both the products have any therapeutic advantage to merit a price exemption. The exemption, if granted, will be valid for five years. Both the companies have been trying to seek an exemption under para 32 of the Drug Price Control Orders (DPCO) that says the price cap won’t apply if a new drug developed through a unique and indigenous process is patented under the Indian Patents Act and is not produced elsewhere.

The stents developed by Meril are known as MeRes100. However, the year they were granted approval by the Drug Controller General of India—in 2017—was also when prices were slashed. This prompted Meril to hold back from launching the stents.

The company says its stents are biodegradable, and an alternative to traditional metal stents.



### **In 8 of 10 persons with head injuries ‘golden hour’ lost in transit: SKIMS study**

March 5, 2019/Greater Kashmir

Over 80 percent of people who suffer accidental head injuries in Kashmir get medical intervention after the loss of “golden hour”, which lessens their chances of survival, a latest study by Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) has revealed. The neurosurgery department of SKIMS has compiled the study regarding the head trauma, involving at least 1153 head injury cases, which reported at the Institute, between November 2017 and October 2018.

The study revealed that 80.70 percent of the total cases had reached the hospital after loss of the golden hour, the first hour after receiving trauma, which is considered to be very critical. “This depicts the poor pre-hospital management and slow transportation of these injured, potentially salvageable patients to the referral centers,” the researchers deduced. Most of these injuries are caused in road accidents (50.3 percent) while falls from height was another cause of injury to another 28 percent, according to the study carried out by Dr Irfan Hussain.

An efficient and fast ambulance service, he hoped, could help in saving lives. “Definitely, if a person, trained in basic life support is able to reach an injured person immediately, and provide intervention needed at that time, it could save a person’s life,” he said. He added that in addition to improving patient transport services, there was a need to improve trauma care services in hospitals as well.

Recently, the state government, after years of failure to make 108 ambulance service operational, decided to outsource it. This fleet 120 ambulances announced in 2012 is meant to provide safe, round-the-clock and prompt transport of those injured in road accidents through a control room and GPS fitted vehicles.

However, for years, in a state where injuries are the leading cause of death and disability in the young (15-39 years), according to **Indian Council of Medical Research** data, no efforts have been made to reduce the time between injury and medical help.

### **Bhopal: 8 test positive for H1N1, four critical**

March 5, 2019/The Times of India

BHOPAL: Eight people have tested positive for H1N1 over the weekend of which four are in critical condition, according to the health department report. So far this year, the deadly contagion has resulted in over 55 deaths in Madhya Pradesh while over 270 have tested positive. Three of the four suspected patients are undergoing treatment at private care facilities. One of the critically ill is on ventilator life support and has been admitted in Hamidia hospital. According to doctors, the patient is not a native of Bhopal. So far this year, 97 people in Bhopal have tested positive for H1N1. Testing of H1N1 takes places in two laboratories of Bhopal. Health department has informed that over four dozen samples of suspected H1N1 patients are pending. H1N1 testing is also conducted by **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** laboratory in Jabalpur. “All facilities to identify and treat H1N1 patients are functioning optimally. There is sufficient quantity of medicine (Oseltamivir) available to treat H1N1 cases. We have provided all our staffers handling swine flu patients with specialised N95 masks,” said a health department official.

#### **4 tips to reduce the risk of colon cancer**

March 6, 2019/The Health Site

Colon cancer is also known as the cancer of the large intestine (colon). According to the estimates of **Indian Council of Medical Research**, the prevalence of colon cancer cases among men is 4.4 per 1,00,000 persons. Although this cancer type is more likely to affect elderly people, over the years, several cases of colon cancer are also being reported in young adults. The symptoms of colon cancer include diarrhoea, rectal bleeding, abdominal cramps and sudden weight loss. If you suffer from these symptoms, immediately consult your doctor. You can reduce the risk of developing colon cancer, if you change your lifestyle and eating habits. Here, we list out a few tips you can try to keep the occurrence of colon cancer at bay.

Leave smoking: Smoking makes you more susceptible to develop colon cancer and its affect is more severe in women as compared to men. Studies have mentioned that even after a quitting smoking for a decade, women still reported cases of colon cancer.

Brown rice: Scientists have noted that consuming wholegrains and cereals can reduce the risk of colon cancer. You should include brown rice and oats in your diet as they help to keep your guts healthy.

Sun exposure: Regularise sun exposure to reduce the risk of colon cancer. However, avoid excessive exposure as it may lead to sunburn and even turn into skin cancer.

Manage your weight: According to a several studies, if you are overweight, you increase your risk of developing a colon polyp. However, the polyps are not dangerous, but they can eventually turn into cancer.

#### **ICMR launches IndiCleft tool**

March 7, 2019/Bio Spectrum

A national web-based portal on cleft education and researchers' platform has been launched at **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, New Delhi by Secretary DHR and DG ICMR Prof. Balram Bhargava recently. The Indicleft tool is the first of its kind in the world that provides facility to the researcher's data and findings to upload cleft anomaly from any site. The tool envisages on all aspects of cleft anomaly from the time of conception, birth and till adulthood. The research tool was developed under aegis of a Task Force multispeciality project funded by ICMR in collaboration with Centre for Dental Education and Research, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi.

The project is on multicentre mode. The overall goal of the project is to establish strategies for prevention and treatment of this deformity. As a part of the study, a comprehensive IndiCleft tool has been developed in collaboration with National Informatics Centre (NIC), which has been employed across different participating centres in the country. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for recording extra and intra oral photographs, radiographs, dental study model and investigations on hearing and speech defect have been developed in the IndiCleft tool.

## Rural health and research unit to be set up in Durg

March 8, 2019/The Pioneer

The Chhattisgarh government on Thursday entered into an agreement with the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, Jabalpur to set up a model rural and health research unit for prompt and effective diagnosis and treatment in tribal areas. ICMR Jabalpur Director Dr Aparup Das and secretary, health and family welfare department of the Chhattisgarh government Niharika Barik Singh signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish the health facility at the government hospital premises in Jheet village, Durg district. With the establishment of the research unit, extending timely medical services in rural areas will be now possible as it would be holding continuous research and provide early forecast regarding the diseases and also conduct surveillance, health department sources said. The institute will also impart training to health department staff, laboratory technicians and para-medical staff.

Besides, it will provide for early detection and timely intervention of epidemic such as malaria, dengue, swine flu in rural and urban areas of Durg, Bhilai and Raipur. At present for vector-borne diseases, the collected samples from the area are sent to Jabalpur or other institutes of the country. After the establishment of the institute, the samples can be tested there, thus helping in early detection and treatment. The ICMR, Jabalpur will bear the establishment and maintenance cost of the research unit which will have scientists, medical scientists and technical staff. The ICMR, Jabalpur, is a 100 years old institution which has been conducting research on various health issues.

With regards,

Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi  
Information Interface Officer/PRO  
Indian Council of Medical Research-  
Department of Health Research  
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
proicmr@gmail.com, syed.adil@icmr.gov.in  
Ext. 286, Phone. 26589130