



PRESS RELEASE

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) releases findings on the cause of surge of HIV in Unnao, Uttar Pradesh (UP) in 2017-18 in an International Journal PLoS ONE *Research establishes unsafe injection practices as the cause of the outbreak*

New Delhi, December 5, 2020: ICMR has released its findings from a case-control study conducted on the sudden increase in the detection of HIV among attendees of Integrated Counseling and Testing Center (ICTC) located in a district hospital, Unnao, UP in 2017. Through the study and evidence generated, it was established that '*unsafe injection exposure during treatment-seeking*' and receipt of intramuscular injection in the last five years were independently associated with HIV sero-reactive (presence of antibodies) status.

The findings have helped establish that the infection arising from blood transfusion, undergoing invasive surgical procedures, tattooing, tonsuring of head or skin piercing was not related to the surge in the cases. The study was done on individuals detected HIV sero-reactive during November 2017-April 2018 from three locations namely Premganj, Karimuddinpur and Chakmeerapur in the Bangarmau block of the Unnao district.

The study participants were interviewed based on various risk practices and invasive treatment procedures. They were also tested for HIV and other bio-markers reflecting unsafe injecting and sexual exposures. Along with this, secondary data analysis on three time points was performed which revealed a rising trend of HIV among attendees of specific ICTCs in the district.

Speaking about the study, the corresponding author, **Dr. Samiran Panda, Director, ICMR-National AIDS Research Institute, Pune** said, "*The study has been critical to understanding the outbreak and the challenges associated with unsafe injection practices. A comprehensive approach to tackle the problem should be adopted with interventions like increasing access of auto-disabled syringes and needles, empowering the local communities and implementing effective regulatory practices across care settings.*"

Paper can be accessed at |

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/comments?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0243534>

About ICMR: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), New Delhi, is the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research, is one of the oldest medical research bodies in the world. ICMR's research priorities align with the National health priorities. These efforts are undertaken with a view to reduce the total burden of disease and to promote health and well-being of the population. ICMR promotes biomedical research in the country through intramural as well as extramural research. Visit us at <https://www.icmr.gov.in/>

Contacts

Dr Samiran Panda
Director, ICMR-NARI, Pune &
Head, ECD, Division, ICMR Hqrs, New Delhi
M:+919830908475
pandasamiran@gmail.com

Dr Rajni Kant,
Scientist 'G' & Director,
RMRC, G'pur, Head, RMPPC & CU
M: +91 9891274684
rajnikant.srivastava@gmail.com

Media Coordinator

Dr Lokesh Sharma
Scientist E
Indian Council of Medical Research
M: +917567311014
sharma.lk@icmr.gov.in