



**INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH**

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

**PRESS RELEASE**

**ICMR launches the National Data Quality Forum (NDQF) to improve quality of health and demographic data in India**

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The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)'s National Institute for Medical Statistics (ICMR - NIMS), in partnership with Population Council, launched the National Data Quality Forum (NDQF) in the ICMR Hqrs today. The launch was attended by representatives from the government, academic institutions, technology and developmental partners who work towards strengthening the data ecosystem in the country. These included Dr. Vinod k Paul, NITI Aayog Govt. of India, Director General ICMR, Dr. Balram Bhargava, Director General of the National Council of Applied Economic Research, Dr. Shekhar Shah, WHO Representative to India Dr. Henk Bekedem, Director and Senior Professor of the International Institute for Population Sciences, Dr. KS James, Director, ICMR-NIMS, Dr M Vishnu Vardhana Rao, Country Director for Population Council, Dr. Niranjana Saggurti and Country Lead for Measurement, Learning and Evaluation for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Dr. Suneeta Krishnan, among others.

NDQF will integrate learnings from scientific and evidence-based initiatives and guide actions through periodic workshops and conferences. Its activities will gear towards establishing protocols and good practices when dealing with data collection, storage, use and dissemination that can be applied to health and demographic data, as well as replicated across industries and sectors.

India has a rich resource of data on its population, its health status and demographic behaviour and economic condition among many other aspects of life and environment. This wealth of data is translated into insights and, eventually, into policy through a layered process involving human and technological inputs at every stage. However, these data often suffer from some common challenges related to human and technological factors and affect its quality. While in recent years data quality improvement efforts have been undertaken in both the public and private sectors at independent institution levels, a convergence of these efforts is yet to be achieved in the form of an integrated platform at the national level that can guide data quality improvement efforts in a cohesive manner.

With a renewed emphasis on improving the quality of data that feeds into evidence based decision making at different levels, the NDQF hopes to bring together relevant stakeholders, subject matter experts, industry leaders, decision makers, and data scientists / analysts onto a common platform. This platform will be guided by the direction provided by a high level steering committee and operationalized with the help of a technical advisory group composed of subject matter experts. With a mandate to create a dialogue for data quality, and build a like-minded community of practice.

“We are delighted to launch the National Data Quality Forum and embark upon a fruitful collaboration to generate meaningful dialogue around the improvement of data quality in general, and for health and medical research in particular.” Prof. (Dr.) Balram Bhargava, Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research.

“NCAER is committed to the improvement of data quality in India by fostering an innovation driven culture of data collection through its activities and partnerships. We are excited about the community of practice that the National Data Quality Forum hopes to establish for producers and consumers of data across the country.” Dr. Shekhar Shah, Director General for the National Council of Applied Economic Research.

“Challenges related to data quality need to be addressed at multiple levels and the International Institute for Population Sciences is committed to contributing to the improvement of the quality of health and demographic data in the country through strategic partnerships, such as with the National Data Quality Forum.” Dr. KS James, Director and Senior Professor of the Mumbai based International Institute for Population Sciences.

“WHO's commitment to improving the quality of data that is used for medical and scientific research across the world is reflected in its robust analysis, preventive medical treatments and solutions and crisis management strategies. I am proud to be a part of the concerted effort being undertaken by India to enhance its health and demographic data quality. We hope for the work by NDQF to inform our work here at the WHO in India form a meaningful knowledge alliance for shared learning.” Dr. Henk Bekedem, WHO Representative to India.

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