



भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान अनुसंधान परिषद  
स्वास्थ्य अनुसंधान विभाग, स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार  
कल्याण मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार

Indian Council of Medical Research  
Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health  
and Family Welfare, Government of India

No: Suicide/MH/2023-NCD-II

Date: 29/05/2023

## Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

### For ICMR's Multistate Implementation Research Study on Suicide Prevention Interventions

#### Overview

Suicides are preventable, for every 40 seconds a person dies by suicide somewhere in the world and many more attempt suicide. The inclusion of "Suicide Mortality Rate" as an indicator under the Sustainable Development Goal(SDG) monitoring framework (Indicator 3.4.2), demonstrates the global commitment to address this issue more effectively. Suicides occur throughout the lifespan, notably, among young people 15-29 years of age, suicide is the second leading cause of death globally. In India, the suicide rate has been on the rise with a reported rate of 12 per 100,000 of the population in 2021, reflecting a 6.2% increase from the previous year. According to WHO, the crude suicide rate in the age-group 15-29 years (per 100,000 population for both sexes) for India was recorded as 15.72<sup>1</sup>, thus demonstrating the fact that suicidal behaviour has become a significant public health concern, especially among the young age groups.

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation due to factors such as stress, isolation, and economic difficulties. There have been some progressive actions by the country in this regard. One such example is the launch of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy in Nov 2022<sup>2</sup>, with the objective of reducing suicide mortality by 10% by 2030, Despite these alarming statistics, a suicide prevention framework that is based on scientific interventions is largely lacking in the country. Therefore, the aim of this EOI is to identify researchers from across the country to join the team being constituted for ICMR's Multistate Implementation Research Study on Suicide Prevention Interventions. The selected researchers shall be invited to join the research team and shall collaborate to develop full proposal. The goal is to reduce the burden due to suicidal behaviour and promote mental well-being, thereby improving the mental health outcomes in the country.

#### Objectives

- To encourage the development of evidence-based interventions for suicide prevention, including interventions targeted at school and college students.
- Prioritize the development, implementation and evaluation of practical, scalable, and sustainable solutions focusing on the integration of local knowledge and expertise in the design and implementation of research projects.
- Foster collaboration and partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, mental health professionals and community-based organizations to address suicide prevention in India

#### Priority Research Question

**How can suicide prevention interventions, which have been proven to be effective, be implemented among school and college students?**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mental-health/suicide-rates>

<sup>2</sup> <https://main.mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/National%20Suicide%20Prevention%20Strategy.pdf>

## **Framework for developing EOI (may include these points)**

### **Focusing on a Package of Interventions/Strategies:**

#### **Universal Package:**

- Implement gatekeeper training: Training teachers, counsellors, staff members, parents, peers etc. to identify signs of distress and respond appropriately.
- Coping strategies: Teaching students effective coping mechanisms to manage stress and build resilience.
- Health promotion: Promoting overall well-being through initiatives healthy lifestyle such as, adequate physical activity, healthy diet, away from addictions (tobacco, alcohol, other psychotropic substances, internet), and mental health promotion.
- Early identification/screening: Conducting regular screening for distress, signs and symptoms for mental disorders and substance use, ensuring early detection and intervention and effective referral.

#### **Indicated/Targeted Package:**

- Identification of students at high risk and offering targeted/ indicated interventions: Assessment of family history of mental health issues, past history of suicidal behaviour/self-harm and provide appropriate support and resources.
- Specific focus on high-risk situations and phases: Identification of examination-related stress, interpersonal difficulties being faced by the students and addressing the same.
- Enhancing social skills: Providing training and workshops to develop social skills, fostering positive relationships and reducing isolation. Creating buddy-support groups will be helpful.

Please note: The aforementioned list is indicative. You may suggest other interventions that can be taken up for consideration during the development of final proposal.

#### **Target Population:**

- School and college students: The intervention package is to be targeted at students in educational institutions (including schools and colleges), considering different age groups and academic levels. The interventions can be delivered through persons with whom students interact including teachers, parents, school counsellors, peer groups, among others.

#### **Research Design:**

- Mixed method designs including qualitative and quantitative approaches, using an implementation science framework. If necessary, evaluation may be planned using a cluster randomized trial approach.

#### **Measures of Outcome:**

A set of outcome measures shall be used. These shall include the impact on suicidal/ self-harm behaviour (including ideation, plan, attempt), impact on examination stress, interpersonal relationship, impulsivity, and career-related challenges among students. The other outcome measures shall include the experience with implementation of the intervention(s), the experience of the participants (e.g, how empowered the participants felt, comfort level while holding difficult discussions, among others), and challenging and facilitating factors, among others.

## **Format of Expression of Interest (EOI) to be submitted (Max two pages)**

### **A. Rationale of proposed study including the choice of sites (states and districts) where the implementation shall be carried out**

The proposal should clearly state the rationale for the study, the recommended sites (states and districts) and the likelihood of utilization of the model by stakeholders in the future. The proposal can also provide evidence from previous research on the topic in the county or elsewhere, and describe any district or state-specific challenges related to implementation for the target group(s).

### **B. Implementation Strategy**

Provide a clear and detailed description of the intervention(s) being implemented, including the target population, the intervention components, and the implementation strategies. You may include preparatory activities, mapping, a timeline, steps of implementation, measures of outcome, data management and deliverables.

### **C. Address feasibility and scalability**

Address the feasibility and scalability of the proposed intervention or policy, including the resources needed for implementation, the capacity of the implementing organization, and the potential for wider adoption and scale-up.

### **D. Research Team**

Summarize and justify the composition of the research team, based on the expertise of the individual team members in designing and implementing the project. Also, highlight the skill set and expertise the members shall bring to the research team that shall be constituted by the ICMR Hqrs for the development of the final protocol and research project implementation.

### **E. Established relationships with state and district health systems and educational institutions**

Operational feasibility would be key for this implementation research study. Include the collaborations that have been established with the potential stakeholders and participants including state and district health and educational systems, along with the management of select institutions.

### **Illustrative Budget outline (additional to the two-page limit)**

The final site budgets for the proposal will be developed by the selected research team(s) under the guidance of ICMR. In this EOI, provide an estimated budget outline (no budget justification required at this stage) under the following headings: staff, recurring contingency, data management, travel and equipment.

### **One-page CV of the principal investigator and other key investigators in single pdf (additional to the two-page limit)**

Please provide a one-page CV of the PI and other key investigators from each identified area. Each CV should include:

- Academic and professional qualifications
- Current position and affiliation
- Up to five most relevant previous research grants
- Up to five most relevant previous publications

### **Review process:**

The EOI documents for the Multistate Implementation Research Project on Suicide Prevention Interventions will be evaluated and shortlisted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The ICMR team will screen the applications for technical accuracy and eligibility. The shortlisted teams will then collaborate to develop a detailed proposal, under the guidance of ICMR Hqrs. The proposal will be

evaluated based on factors such as study design, feasibility, data management capabilities, prior experience, engagement with public health and education systems, and potential for seamless integration. The feasibility and suitability of integration of the proposed methodology in the final proposal to be developed under the guidance of ICMR Hqrs shall also be considered while shortlisting the EOI.

### **Who can submit the EOI?**

The EOI can be submitted through ONLINE MODE ONLY by scientists/ professionals who have regular employment in Medical Institutes/ Research Institutes/ Universities/ Colleges/ Government and semi-government organizations and NGOs (documentary evidence of their recognition including DSIR certificate should be available).

### **Points to be kept in mind while submitting the EOI**

1. The EOI must address the specific research question that is mentioned in the call text.
2. Collaborative, multi-centre, interdisciplinary research initiatives from the applicant will be encouraged.
3. Descriptive studies, systematic reviews and secondary data analysis will not be considered
4. Should focus on outcomes that are translatable into policy.
5. Evaluation of the development of indigenous technologies and solutions relevant to the Indian context may be prioritized
6. Foreign collaboration is not allowed under the call.

Interested parties should fill out the Google form at the below link and submit an **Expression of Interest (EOI)** as per the Format given above. Only shortlisted PI will be contacted

**Link** -<https://forms.gle/WgPV1RiJwuPVpQpZA>

### **Timeline**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Date</b>
Release of Call	29- May-2023
Last date for submission of EOI	30- June -2023
Shortlisting of EOIs	15 -July-2023
Proposal Development Workshop	03-August-2023
Submission of a full proposal	25-August- 2023

**For any queries related to the call, please contact**

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