



## Press Release

### **ICMR and NACO study shows the successes of India's free Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) for HIV patients in India**

*The findings of the study show significant reduction in death and increased survival of patients living with HIV who seek care at the ART clinics across India*

**New Delhi, 15 September 2021:** Prof. Dr. Balram Bhargava; Secretary, DHR (MoHFW), Govt. of India and Director General, ICMR and Shri Alok Saxena, Additional Secretary & Director General, National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), Government of India released the first landmark report on the “ Impact Evaluation of Antiretroviral Treatment, under the National AIDS Control Programme in India”. Antiretroviral Treatment (ART), the multidrug treatment for HIV infection, is provided free to adults and children living with HIV across India by NACO.

This report presents the first national-level ART impact evaluation (ART-IE) of the Government of India's free ART programme under the National AIDS Control Programme. This NACO-commissioned study evaluated the impact of NACP's ART programme on various parameters at 396 ART centres (ARTCs) across the country for the period 2012-2017. Key findings of the report are below:

1. The study demonstrated the high impact of antiretroviral treatment and showed that the chance of death was halved among people on ART after 5 Years of treatment.
2. The probability of Tuberculosis was lower among persons on ART as compared to those not on ART.
3. Cohorts of people who had initiated ART in 2012 and 2016 and continued taking treatment underwent viral load testing and over 90% showed that the virus in their blood was adequately suppressed.
4. Over 70% of beneficiaries of ART reported 'good' or 'very good' quality of life overall and 82% were productively employed.
5. The ART programme under NACP was found to be very cost-effective

This report provides programmatic directions to improve access to care and enhance prevention efforts. It helps guide research for future interventions needs especially in emerging pockets of HIV infection in different parts of India.

This nation-wide project was spearheaded by the ICMR- National AIDS Research Institute (ICMR-NARI) and was implemented through collaboration with five other Institutes of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology, ICMR- National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis,

ICMR- National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases, ICMR- National Institute Of Medical Statistics, ICMR- National Institute for Research in Environmental Health) and the Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi.

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**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/>*

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