



INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

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

**Media report (15th February to 21st February 2020)
(ICMR IN NEWS)**

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Preface

The Communication Unit (CU), ICMR since last one and half years have reached from (where is ICMR located) to (everyday mention of ICMR and DG ICMR in National Media). This change from where to why signifies the media visibility and importance of our organization within this stipulated time duration.

Every week Indian Council of Medical Research and Director General ICMR are mentioned by dozens of daily news papers, periodicals and magazines including online editions.

This week report (ICMR IN NEWS dated 15th February to 21st February 2020) includes the mention Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 19 newspapers including top newspapers such as Times of India, The Indian Express, Hindustan Times, The Hindu among others.

As an organization we first need to fill internal information vacuum at the headquarters as well as the Institutes for better visibility of ICMR which will pave way for complete dilution of external information gap between ICMR and external public including media, government and other related organizations.

Dr L K Sharma
Scientist E & Media Coordinator
Communication Unit

HEADLINES (As it is)



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Health dept to launch case study on COVID-19

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Bill to regulate IVF clinics gets nod

February 20, 2020/The New Indian Express

Medical professionals should ensure no woman dies during pregnancy: Harsh Vardhan

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Medical Professionals Should Ensure No Woman Dies During Pregnancy: Harsh Vardhan

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Creating 'Harvard in India': Medical institutes in Parel can become a cluster of excellence, says Union health minister

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Coronavirus: Australian admitted to Kolkata's ID Hospital

February 21, 2020/The Times of India

Threat from new infections

February 15, 2020/The Tribune

THE world is witnessing a global health emergency, as declared by the WHO, with cases of coronavirus being reported from over two dozen countries, including India. Most of the people testing positive have had a history of travel to China, which is the epicentre of the outbreak. Some cases where the transmission may have occurred outside China have been reported from Singapore, Thailand, Korea, Japan and Malaysia. Given the high mortality rates, the concern is very high.

This can help in mounting countermeasures for controlling the outbreak and for developing diagnostics, drugs and vaccines. The issue of research into new viruses has come into focus in the past few days, with the reported disqualification of a university-based virus research centre in Manipal which was handling the Nipah virus for research purposes. Another institute in Bengaluru working with filoviruses (like Ebola) in bats in Nagaland has also been reportedly probed by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**. In both cases, collaborating researchers from top international bodies were involved. The foreign angle seemed to have triggered such action, despite the centres making it clear that all permissions were taken and that no sample went out of the country. Study results have been published in reputed scientific journals, and in one case, the list of authors includes the ICMR Director General and top technical officials of the Ministry of Health and the government's National Centre for Disease Control.

What you need to know for preventing, detecting and fighting breast cancer

February 15, 2020/Business Standard

There's a common expression that goes — prevention is better than cure. Though clichéd, this wise expression has held true for years, inspiring constructive action to address a problem before it's too late. The proverb is most commonly used to encourage people to take proactive health measures; by going for regular tests and checkups to identify any potential infections as early as possible. According to a report released by **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** in 2018, cancer took more than 700,000 lives in India. This whopping number, excludes the over 2,000,000 Indians who continue to live and suffer from the deadly disease. As per ICMR's estimate, the death toll is expected to rise to 880,000 by 2020. When it comes to cancer amongst women, the number of breast cancer cases are the highest. According to the ministry of health and family welfare, the incidence of breast cancer is 25.8 per 100,000 women and is expected to rise to 35 per 100,000 women in 2026. Despite the innovations in treatment and various awareness campaigns, the risks associated with breast cancer continues to rise. Most doctors believe mammography to be the best way for detecting breast cancer at its nascent stage. However, in India, it has still not been widely adopted, unlike other parts of the world. Although it has numerous advantages over other screening methods. We can win half the battle against breast cancer by zero stage detection and proper guidance of the doctors.

Tracing the journey, and flaws, of the surrogacy bill

February 16, 2020/Hindustan Times



The government has tried to regulate surrogacy for over a decade. Starting with the permissive 2005 guidelines of the **Indian Council for Medical Research**, the government has proposed increasingly restrictive bills in 2008, 2010, 2013 and 2014 and has, through notifications of the ministry of home affairs, sought to exclude prospective parents on the basis of marital status, sexual orientation and citizenship. These efforts culminated in the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016. Said to reflect the “ethos of the Indian people”, the bill, unlike in the past, dealt exclusively with surrogacy rather than with Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) broadly. It banned commercial surrogacy, only permitting altruistic surrogacy, that too performed by a close relative of the couple, where the latter bears the medical expenses and insurance costs. The prospective parents had to be Indian citizens (Overseas Citizens of India, or OCIs, were excluded), and married for at least five years with a medical indication of infertility. The bill’s provisions would be implemented by an elaborate institutional machinery, backed up by stringent punishment. Despite these recommendations, a largely unmodified version of the 2016 bill, namely, the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019 (SRB), was passed by the Lok Sabha in August 2019. When presented to the Rajya Sabha, it was referred to a select committee, which submitted its report on February 5, 2020.

Coronavirus: All 406 inmates at ITBP camp test negative

February 16, 2020/Social News

All 406 people housed at the quarantine facility at an ITBP camp here will be sent to their residences in phased manner from Monday as their final report has come out negative with no coronavirus infection symptoms, the force said on Sunday. The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**-- the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research -- submitted the report to the ITBP, mentioning negative coronavirus findings. The group of people were brought back from China's Wuhan -- the epicentre of the deadly infection -- on February 1 and 2 and were shifted at Chhawla quarantine facility of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). Since then they have been kept under observation of an expert team of doctors and medical professionals. There are also seven people from Maldives and seven children, including an infant in the group. They were kept under observations since they were shifted to the camp and periodical checkups being done as per medical protocol. "The final report of all 406 people housed here in Chhawla has been found negative. Dispersal of people from the centre to commence from tomorrow (Tuesday) afternoon in a phased manner," ITBP Spokesperson Vivek Pandey said. The final coronavirus test of all 406 people was completed on Friday.

Childhood cancers can be cured by timely diagnosis, say experts

February 16, 2020/The Hindu



Cancer in children constitutes 5.5 % of the total cancer cases in India, according to data available with the **Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR)**. While cure rates for common childhood cancers like lymphoma and leukaemia are over 80% in the developed world, in India they are abysmally low at around 30% due to challenges like inadequate access to timely and quality healthcare and exorbitant treatment costs in the private sector. A majority of childhood cancer cases are being diagnosed between five and 14 years of age, that too at fairly advanced stages. These cancers are completely curable, if diagnosed early and treated in time, said Dr. Nirmalya Deo Pradhan, paediatric oncologist at Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (HBCH & RC), on the occasion of International Childhood Cancer Day on Saturday. Around 90% of children with cancer are being given free treatment at HBCH & RC with funds for Women and Children's Cancer, provided by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. "The symptoms are different for different cancers, but children suffering from cancer have poor growth, poor weight gain and decreased appetite. One must get their children evaluated on seeing these symptoms," said Dr. Pradhan.

Coronavirus: All 406 Inmates At ITBP Camp Test Negative

February 16, 2020/ABP News

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Lead Exposure, A Possible Risk Factor Causing Alzheimer's Disease: ICMR



February 17, 2020/Mondaq

On January 13, 2020, the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** reported 'Lead exposure' as a possible risk factor for causing Alzheimer's disease based on a study conducted at National Institute of Nutrition (NIN- ICMR)¹. Alzheimer's is a neurodegenerative disorder and the most common form of dementia which usually affects the functioning of memory, thinking and behavior in brain. The pathophysiology of Alzheimer's involves the formation of beta amyloid plaques and tangles in the brain. In addition, oxidative stress and inflammation are known to be involved in the progression of the disease, with loss of memory and neuronal cell death. In the early stage, dementia symptoms may be minimal, but with time the symptoms worsen. Currently there is no proven treatment available to halt and cure the Alzheimer's disease from progressing, but there are medications to treat symptoms of dementia. Lead (Pb) a common pollutant found in the environment is released from a number of items like paints, cosmetics, batteries, and glass. As a toxic material, lead can cause pathophysiological dysfunctions of the central nervous system. A recent study conducted at ICMR- National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) has established the possible link between lead exposure and Alzheimer's disease. Therefore, scientists are looking forward to find the possible molecular mechanism on lead induced Alzheimer's disease through in-vitro studies. In in-vitro study, brain cells are accumulated with beta amyloid peptides in case of Alzheimer's disease and the effect of Lead exposure was then studied. The study showed increased cell death and increased levels of proapoptotic marker proteins.

Vardhan interacts with Wuhan evacuees at ITBP Chhawla camp

February 17, 2020/United News of India

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday interacted with several Indian nationals who had been quarantined at ITBP Chhawla Camp for over a fortnight and have tested negative for the deadly Coronavirus disease. The Indian nationals, who were evacuated in batches from Wuhan in China on February 1 and 2, are ready to go home. The Minister felicitated them and handed over letters of appreciation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to doctors and paramedics who were associated with the evacuation of Indian citizens from Wuhan, China, the epicentre of the Covid-19 outbreak. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) submitted the report mentioning negative coronavirus findings to ITBP. According to ITBP sources, all 406 people housed at the quarantine facility at Chhawla camp here will be sent to their residences in a phased manner after **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** submitted its final report that they had tested negative for Covid symptoms. The evacuees were brought back from Wuhan in batches and were shifted at Chhawla quarantine facility of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) where they were kept under observation of an expert team of doctors and medical professionals. Among them were seven Maldivians who too were being kept under observation following their evacuation by Indian authorities.

Coronavirus: Health research body may suggest alternative medicines

February 18, 2020/The Economics Times



A government-led expert panel has asked India's top health research body to recommend alternative medicines or therapies for some antibiotics, vitamins and hormones which may get out of stock in India, in view of the Covid-19 outbreak, people in the know told ET. The panel has identified over 50 such drugs which are likely to get exhausted in next few days amid the prolonged lockdown in China. According to the latest data compiled by India's drug regulatory authority, 57 APIs of crucial antibiotics, vitamins, and hormones or steroids could go out of stock. The list contains antibiotics like Azithromycin, Amoxicillin, Ofloxacin, Metronidazole, vitamins such as B12, B1, B6, and E, female hormone progesterone and anti-cardiac arrest drug Atorvastatin, among others. "The expert panel has asked the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** to recommend alternative drugs/therapies for the same therapeutic category," said one of the persons, requesting anonymity. The expert panel had earlier asked the drug manufacturers to share their inventories. The panel has shortlisted 57 such drugs which may go out of stock soon based on the stock information it received from the companies. "The ICMR has been asked to recommend alternative drugs at the earliest which the doctors can prescribe in case of unavailability of these antibiotics and other drugs," added another person.

1st step to coronavirus shield ready for pre-clinical tests, human trials in 6 months

February 18, 2020/The Times of India

A candidate vaccine is ready for pre-clinical trials, and possibly even human trials within six months, as part of the collaboration by Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) and American biotechnology firm Codagenix to develop a preventive vaccine against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). While efforts to find a coronavirus vaccine have already started globally, the SII-Codagenix candidate vaccine, developed using a laboratory-made synthetic virus, is an important breakthrough because it could significantly reduce the time taken to build a shield against the virus at the heart of the current outbreak emanating from China.

"Conventional approaches usually take seven to eight years to fully develop a vaccine for use. We have already marched ahead by generating a candidate vaccine in the laboratory of our US-based partner Codagenix. Our vaccine-virus strain is identical to the original virus and can generate a robust immune response," industrialist Adar Poonawalla, owner and CEO of SII, told TOI in an exclusive interview on Monday. Industrialist Adar Poonawalla said, "We will be ready for human trials within six months, which makes it the fastest 'Made in India' vaccine to enter this phase. Thereafter, it all depends on the regulatory clearance from the Union health ministry. Human studies will take another year. We hope to be ready with the vaccine by early 2022. This shows India's capability to respond to a global pandemic in real time." When contacted, senior scientist R R Gangakhedkar, chief of epidemiology at the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, told TOI, "The approach is exciting in principle. It will be wonderful if it works. But it will have to go through elaborate laboratory and animal studies before being tested in human clinical trials. Using this method, they (SII) may also go closer to produce a generic influenza vaccine as against the current cocktail of three strains."

231 Indian, 7 Maldivians sent home from ITBP camp

February 18, 2020/Outlook India



A total of 238 people, including seven Maldivians, housed at a quarantine facility here in Chhawla ITBP camp have been sent home after they tested negative in the final check -- with no coronavirus infection symptoms, officials said on Tuesday.

They are among 406 inmates, including seven children, who were shifted to the west Delhi quarantine facility of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) after the group was brought back from China's Wuhan -- the epicentre of the deadly virus -- on February 1 and 2. "Out of 406 inmates, 238 were sent to their home on Monday after their final report found negative. Their disbersal began on Monday afternoon. Most of the 238 inmates left from Chhawla camp to their destinations by Monday night," ITBP Spokesperson Vivek Pandey told IANS. Of the 238, seven are from Maldives and they left for their country in a flight around 4.30 a.m. on Tuesday.

As per the ITBP spokesperson, the disbersal process of other inmates will continue through Tuesday. The disbersal process of the 406 inmates began following the **Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR)**-- the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research -- final report submitted on Sunday to the ITBP confirmed negative findings mentioned negative coronavirus symptom. The inmates, including an infant were kept under observation of an expert team of doctors and medical professionals.

Need to be ready to handle large number of coronavirus-like cases: India's top virologist

February 19, 2020/The Print

There's a possibility that passengers of Diamond Princess cruise ship who tested negative for coronavirus may still be carrying it, said Dr G. Arunkumar, director of Manipal Institute of Virology. "Closed community in the ship is very conducive for transmission. I am not sure all the positive cases are of one generation. There may be others who got exposed within the ship and may be incubating. So we may still see cases," he told The Print. Arunkumar is a virologist, who had investigated several disease outbreaks, including Gorakhpur encephalitis, and was also at the forefront of detecting the Nipah virus in Kerala. The cruise ship was docked off the Japanese coast after being found to be a carrier of the virus. After China, the cruise ship had the highest number of positive cases — 542. Since the 14-day quarantine period is over, many countries have evacuated their passengers from the ship, including the United States. Indian embassy had earlier said it would begin the process of debarking of Indian passengers after they test negative for the virus. On Monday, the Indian embassy said that two more Indians on board the ship have tested positive for the novel virus — bringing the number to six.

Two weeks ago, the government had said the Manipal Centre for Virus Research (MCVR) laboratory did not have the required clearance to deal with Nipah virus, which could be used as a bioweapon. The government had even asked the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention to halt their funding to the MCVR to work on the Nipah virus. Calling the government's allegations baseless and irresponsible, 49-year-old Arunkumar said: "We strongly and categorically deny the allegation. Everything was done with regular oversight of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Government of India." Manipal Institute of Virology was formerly known as Manipal Centre for Virus Research. The MCVR was set up with funding from the **Indian Council of Medical Research**, which continued its funding until 2019, he told The Print.

[Mumbai: Research body behind India's test-tube baby feat turns 50](#)

February 20, 2020/The Times of India



The birth of India's first test-tube baby Harsh Chavda in 1986 was a great scientific achievement for BMC-run KEM Hospital in Parel and gynaecologist Indira Hinduja, but not everyone knows most of the complex laboratory work was carried out in a building in one of the narrow bylanes near KEM. The building houses the National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health, one of the premier **Indian Council of Medical Research** institutes that completes 50 years on Thursday. "NIRRH pioneered the use of reproductive technologies that led to the birth of the first well-documented test tube baby in our country in August 1986. It led to a scientific revolution that changed lives of millions of women with fertility problems," said former NIRRH director Dr Chander Puri. NIRRH, formerly called Institute of Reproductive Research, started as a family planning institute. "Over the years, the institute expanded its mandate to include the field of sexual and reproductive health as well as maternal and child health," said director Dr S Mahale. It collaborates with the city's major teaching hospitals to develop norms for various health indicators such as maternal mortality.

Old-timers remember NIRRH as one of the best places for research. "Clinical trials for most contraceptive pills were done here," said a KEM doctor. NIRRH work focused on improving quality of life of women, said Dr Mahale. It has also done pioneering work in detection and diagnosis of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. "We have conducted several studies to address female infertility and associated disorders such as endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, premature ovarian failure and idiopathic male infertility," she added.

[Health dept to launch case study on COVID-19](#)

February 20, 2020/The New Indian Express

The state Health department is giving shape to a plan to conduct a clinical case study on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), an acute respiratory disease which has resulted in the death of 1,873 people globally so far. The study will be conducted on the three persons who tested positive for COVID-19 in the state. According to the department, the study is significant as all the positive cases reported in the country are from Kerala. "As of now, the outbreak is under control. But, from the epidemiological perspective, chances are high that another outbreak might happen. It might be in Kerala or metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai or Calcutta. So it was decided to launch a clinical case study on the present outbreak," said a Health department officer. The positive cases, reported from Thrissur, Alappuzha and Kasaragod, are medical students who had returned to the state from Wuhan in China, which is the epicentre of COVID-19 outbreak. With the repeated tests turning negative, two patients, admitted at Alappuzha and Kasaragod, were discharged. In the case of one admitted at Thrissur, repeat sample results are awaited. According to a source, the Health department had earlier blocked the advances of national institutes like the **Indian Council of Medical Research** to launch a study in the state regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. For the same, it is said, a circular was issued which makes it mandatory for institutes to seek the permission of a panel chaired by principal secretary of health Rajan Khobragade before conducting studies on the COVID-19 outbreak.

[Bill to regulate IVF clinics gets nod](#)

February 20, 2020/The New Indian Express



Clinics and banks offering in-vitro fertilisation and other related services across India will soon have to maintain minimum standards in qualification of manpower, infrastructure, laboratory and diagnostic equipment. The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Artificial Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2020 which will pave the way for mandatory registration of all ART clinics and constitution of a national board for ART. The board will monitor ART clinics centrally and will be empowered to frame code of conduct for people working at such centres. The Bill, which was dubbed as a path-breaking by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, has also suggested fixing age limits of 50 and 55 years for women and men, respectively, as reported by this newspaper earlier this month. The government admits that while ART clinics in India offer nearly all the services — gamete donation, intrauterine insemination, IVF, intracytoplasmic sperm injection, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis and gestational surrogacy — there is yet no standardisation of protocols and reporting on these clinics is still very inadequate. The ART Bill prepared by the **Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR)** also says that along with a national board, there will be state boards to monitor the functioning of such clinics and there will be national registry and registration authority to maintain a central database and assist the national board in its functioning.

[Medical professionals should ensure no woman dies during pregnancy: Harsh Vardhan](#)

February 20, 2020/Devdiscourse

Making a continuous effort to reduce the maternal mortality in India, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday said that medical professionals have to ensure that not a single woman in the country dies during pregnancy. Addressing the Golden Jubilee Celebration of **ICMR's** - National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health (NIRRH) held in Mumbai, Harsh Vardhan said, "We medical professionals have to own the responsibility for the occurrence of maternal mortality and ensure that not a single woman in this country dies during pregnancy." "It is our duty to ensure that the life of a pregnant woman is not put to unnecessary danger. We started Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) and it has received a huge response," he added. "Legislation on abortion has been passed and Surrogacy Bill is being taken up. Assisted Reproductive Technology Regulation Bill has been passed by Cabinet. These are historic bills and they were based on great inputs given by ICMR," said the minister who also inaugurated the International Conference on Women's Reproductive Health. Harsh Vardhan also pointed out that the government is taking strong actions to eliminate tuberculosis (TB) by 2025. "The Centre has pledged to eliminate TB by 2025. The TB eradication programme is an ambitious programme, under which the government pays for total treatment on TB. I would specifically ask NIRRH and all other institutes working in this field to provide suggestions for the elimination of TB from the face of India by 2025."

Medical Professionals Should Ensure No Woman Dies During Pregnancy: Harsh Vardhan



February 20, 2020/Letestly News

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Coronavirus: Australian admitted to Kolkata's ID Hospital

February 21, 2020/The Times of India

The ID Hospital on Thursday had three corona virus suspects admitted to its isolation ward, including a 75-year-old Australian, who was referred from a private hospital. Sources in the health department said swab samples of the 75-year-old was collected on Thursday and sent to **ICMR-NICED**. The results are expected to come by Friday. The 75-year-old woman had gone to a private hospital in Alipore on Wednesday night with complaints of respiratory distress. According to the hospital sources, she has a recent travel history to Singapore. On getting her travel history, officials directed her to ID Hospital, which is the nodal hospital for COVID-19. "Her swab samples have been sent. She, however, does not have any severe symptom," said state health department source. Till date, the health department has got 22 samples of Corona virus suspects tested. While 21 samples have tested negative, result of one sample is awaited. Out of 206 persons on home surveillance, five have completed the surveillance period.

Creating 'Harvard in India': Medical institutes in Parel can become a cluster of excellence, says Union health minister



February 21, 2020/The Indian Express

Stating that a vision to create 'Harvard in India' could be achieved with the existing medical institutes in Parel, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday said institutes must start co-ordinating and linking their latest research to create a cluster of excellence in health and medicine. Harsh Vardhan was in Mumbai to inaugurate a three-day international conference for women's reproductive health. He referred to Tata Memorial Hospital, KEM hospital, Haffkine Institute, National Institute of Research in Reproductive Health (NIRRH) and National Institute of Immunohaematology, all located in narrow lanes of Parel, and said, "I visited that area today. In this digital era, everyone should know the latest research to help each other. PhD students can benefit and share knowledge. In a set time frame we can work to improve coordination of all these institutes so that they become a cluster of excellence," Harsh Vardhan said. The NIRRH, a branch of the **Indian Council of Medical Research**, that works on infertility and reproductive health, is celebrating its golden jubilee this year. Harsh Vardhan released a booklet for the institute on deceased physician Subhas Mukherjee, who was the first to perform a successful in-vitro fertilisation in 1978 in Kolkata, but ended his life after his work was not recognised in 1981. "His passion for research should continue. It is a loss that he died at the age of 50. He is a source of inspiration and this institute must continue its work in infertility and reproductive health like him," Harsh Vardhan said. Referring to polio eradication campaign that made India polio free in 2014, Harsh Vardhan said the ministry is facing difficulty in reaching the last mile when it comes to neonatal mortality, tuberculosis and diarrhoea deaths and there is need for research on these fronts to drastically reform the programme. "In universal immunisation programme, a child is entitled to all vaccines. No death should happen due to diarrhoea," he said.