INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

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

Media report (19 October to 25 October 2019)
(ICMR IN NEWS)

(Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi)
Information Interface Officer

Preface

The PR Unit/PRO office of 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 19 October to 25 October 2019) includes the mention Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 23 news papers including top news papers such as The Indian Express, The Hindu, Times of India, Deccan Herald, ThePrint, Outlook India, Livemint, Daily Pioneer and 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.

Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi

Information Interface Officer/PRO

ICMR Hqrs, New Delhi

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ICMR IN NEWS (As it is)

ICMR Award to 46 scientists for excellence in biomedical research

19 October 2019 / Indus Dictum

Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan conferred the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**'s awards for excellence in biomedical research on Wednesday. The ICMR awards recognise the contributions of Indian biomedical scientists undertaking pioneering work in various fields of health sciences and finding solutions for the health problems of the country. A total of 39 awards were presented to 46 scientists including 14 women scientists for 2017 and 2018. The awardees belongs to institutions of ICMR, CSIR, AIIMS, PGI, Chandigarh, SGPGI, Lucknow, IITs, JIPMER, Puducherry, SCTIMST, Thiruvananthapuram, Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi, State and Central Universities and other reputed Institutions across the country. Dr. Harsh Vardhan congratulated the awardees for their contribution in the area of health research that will provide new ways and means to solve various health issues. He said, "It is the need of the hour to strengthen innovation for developing new technologies as well as to carry out research to reduce out of pocket expenditures and help in reducing disease burden." He appreciated ICMR's efforts in tackling emerging and re-emerging infections like ZIKA and NIPAH in the country. Secretary Department of Health Research and ICMR Director General, Prof. Balram Bhargava, said, "It has been ICMR's endeavour for over a century now to promote scientific research as well as provide scientists with the necessary platform and tools to find solutions to the most difficult health challenges.

Pune: Harsh Vardhan honours three National Institute of Virology scientists

20 October 2019 / The Indian Express

THREE SCIENTISTS from the National Institute of Virology in Pune were recognised for their pioneering work. Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan awarded Dr Pragya Yadav, Dr Sarah Cherian and Dr K Alagarasu at a function held in New Delhi recently. The Dr J B Srivastav Oration Award for 2017 was presented to Dr Cherian, ICMR-NIV, Pune, for the research work titled 'Evolutionary insights into viral epidemic transmissions and disease pathogenesis'. Dr Cherian has worked towards understanding the evolutionary dynamics of viruses of public health importance, including influenza and dengue, through molecular clock and phylogeography studies. She has also significantly contributed in the area of structural modelling of viral proteins and analyses of virus host interactions in disease pathogenesis. Dr Yadav, Scientist-E, biosafety level-4 laboratory, **ICMR**-NIV, was presented with the Maj Gen Saheb Singh Sokhey award for her research contribution in understanding the causation of outbreaks of highly infectious and pathogenic viral infections, such as Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF), leading to improvising national public health surveillance policy for interventions and management.

UP lets down pregnant women, fails to supply 75-gram Glucose Pouches to test for diabetes

20 October 2019 / National Herald

For a state known for medical tragedies and poor health indicators, Uttar Pradesh commendably had taken the lead in screening pregnant women for diabetes. A pilot programme was launched in Kanpur Nagar district between October 2012 and September 2014. Based on that experience, universal screening was extended to 36 of the state's 75 districts in two instalments. In another 14 districts training of public healthcare professionals – doctors, nurses and auxiliary nurse midwives – is about to be rolled out. But the programme has lost momentum because pouches of 75-gram glucose powder required for the blood test have not been available for the past few months, confirms a doctor intimately associated with the programme. The state's medical supplies corporation has been unable to finalise the tender, the doctor who didn't wish to be named, said. Diabetes is a lifestyle disease caused, among other factors, by obesity and lack of physical exercise. A population-based study of 14 states and one union territory (Chandigarh) published in 2017, said the prevalence of diabetes was 7.3 percent. The prevalence rate in the general population varied from 4.3 percent in Bihar to 10 percent in Punjab. People in urban areas were more at risk than those in rural areas. The results of the survey in UP, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and a few other states will be published next year. It is being conducted by the **Indian Council of Medical Research** and the INdia DIABetes study group.

Artificial pancreas to help Type 1 diabetes patients

21 October 2019 / Deccan Herald

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) have designed an artificial pancreas system to treat Type 1 diabetes, which is all set for clinical trial early next year. The first-of-its-kind innovation will design algorithms specific to the Indian gene and an indigenous insulin pump, which, researchers said, would make the system act like a pancreas. IISc researchers are collaborating with doctors at the MS Ramaiah Medical Hospital to create the pancreas system. The project has received Rs 3.6 crore from the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the **Indian Council of Medical Research**. At IISc, Dr Manish Arora, assistant professor, Center for Product Design and Manufacturing, has been working on an indigenous design of the insulin pump along with Prof Radhakant Padhi from the aeronautical engineering department and Prof K V S Hari from the ECE department. Dr Arora said the insulin pump is ready and the team hopes to go in for clinical trials by July next year. "Although this is bigger than the existing ones in the market by 1.5 times, our focus is accuracy right now. We will work on optimising the size later," he said.

Demand for stem cell treatment likely to increase: Murali Krishna Voonna

21 October 2019 / The Hans India

According to **Indian Council of Medical Research**, around 1.04 lakh blood and lymphatic malignancies were diagnosed, and the number is expected to increase to 1.32 lakh cases per annum by next year. In future, many of the patients would require Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation (HSCT). These were some of the points highlighted by managing director and surgical oncologist of Mahatma Gandhi Cancer Hospital and Research Institute, Murali Krishna Voonna at the conference 'MGBMTCON-2019' organised here on Sunday exclusively for the doctors. Addressing the doctors, he said the donor of stem cells can be patient himself or HLA matched sibling or a random donor. With advanced technologies, he stated that effective treatment methods can be given to cancer patients to treat complex cancers, blood disorders like thalassemia, sickle cell anaemia, aplastic anaemia and blood cancers. "It is the very reason, the hospital launched the Centre for Advanced Hematology and Hematology-Oncology unit (Bone Marrow Transplant)," he said.

Cap on age limit for IVF could be allowed, but only with checks and balances

21 October 2019 / ThePrint

Septuagenarians in India using in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) technologies have met with mixed responses. While IVF is becoming the most common infertility treatment, many countries, including the US, UK and Australia, have recommended age limits for accessing the technology. India, however, currently has no laws restricting IVF access for women of advanced ages. Consequently, in the last three months, at least two IVF-assisted births by women in their 70s have been reported from Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan. The idea of a 70-year-old woman giving birth to a child shocks the sensibilities of a lot of people. Though there is no legal age restriction, the state-funded **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** advises an upper age limit of 50 years. In 2017, the ICMR proposed the IVF Bill to regulate access to IVF based on age, but the Bill is yet to be taken up by the Parliament. IVF is a taxing technique, requiring multiple hormonal interventions to a woman's body. There is fear that women's bodies at older ages cannot cope with these interventions as well as support childbirth. There is evidence that repeated hormonal treatments can increase risk to cancer. Additionally, there are genuine concerns about the quality of life the child would get as the probability of the child's parents living to nurture them until their teenage is relatively low.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month These healthtech startups are using AI and ML for early detection

22 October 2019 / YourStory

Every year, around the world, October is observed as Breast Cancer Awareness month to promote awareness and the need for early detection, treatment and palliative care. Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer affecting women worldwide. Currently, there is insufficient knowledge to determine the causes of this cancer, which is why awareness and early detection are crucial. According to the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR),** more than 1.5 lakh new cases and 70,000 deaths occur due to breast cancer. There are various symptoms to detect breast cancer. It can include a painless lump in the breast, a sudden change in shape and size of the breast, bloody discharge from the nipple, and nipple retraction. A self-breast examination is encouraged among women, especially over the age of 20 to detect any anomalies and report them to a certified medical professional. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), so far the best method for detection of breast cancer is mammography which includes taking an X-ray of the breast tissue and points out abnormal structures within the breast. However, mammography screening is very costly and is only feasible in countries with good health infrastructure. To help in early detection and treatment, healthtech startups have invented new methods that can provide alternative solutions to expensive mammography. These companies are enabling machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) for cancer detection.

Outreach Programme Organized by ICMR RMRCNE, Dibrugarh

22 October 2019 / The Sentinel Assam

The outreach programme under the banner of pre-India International Science Festival 2019 was organized by **ICMR** RMRCNE -Regional Medical Research Centre (ICMR-RMRCNE), Dibrugarh by observing an open day of the centre for students and public recently. Students and faculties from Salt Brook Academy, DHSK College, Sri Sri Aniruddhadeva Junior College, Lahowal College, Dibru College, Victoria Girls HS School, Dibrugarh Government Boys' Higher Secondary School, St. Xavier's School, Chaulkhowa High School and Lahowal Girls' Mes School in and around Dibrugarh were part of the programme in addition to general public. A series of interactive programmes was organized with the scientists of ICMR-RMRCNE, Dibrugarh after a short inaugural session. Provision for visit to various laboratories of ICMR-RMRCNE was made available for the participants to understand the functioning of a biomedical research laboratory. An exhibition on common diseases and their prevention along with demonstration was also organized for the participants. Representatives from all the participating educational institutes took part in a quiz competition arranged as part of the programme.

Meeting with PM Modi 'cordial': Abhijit Banerjee

22 October 2019 / The Hindu

Subtly warning the media, Abhijit Banerjee, winner of 2019 Economics Nobel Prize said that during his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the PM greeted him by cracking a joke about how the media was trapping Banerjee into saying "anti-Modi things". The PM will be watching you guys and he knows what you are trying to do, Banerjee quipped. Speaking to media later on Tuesday here, he said he will not be taking any political questions. One of the primary reasons for him visiting India he said was to start a conversation with Ministry of Health's **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and NITI Aayog on issues surrounding untrained rural health providers. Banerjee said that he practices practical economics which is exactly opposite of pure theoretical economics and that is what has led him to win the prize. Sharing an anecdote which changed his perspective towards Indian healthcare scenario, he said he used to go and sit on the door steps of 'quacks,' or informal care providers whom he and his co-researchers were training. "We would go to the government office in Udaipur and ask the officials about these healthcare providers who are not trained. And they said it is an immense problem, but we can never find them because they are always underground. Two weeks later, we went to a house of a rural healthcare provider. He was very friendly, sitting in front of his house with a sign saying he is a doctor," he said adding "We asked him if he had a medical degree and what was his qualification. And his response was he has passed his 12th grade exam but could not get a job, so he took up the job of a doctor.

Boost to higher education: Funding to govt incubators, public universities now under CSR spend

23 October 2019 / Financial Express

Given that CSR provisions have been in existence from FY15 only, there has been considerable progress both in terms of companies contributing to CSR and the overall spend. n a bid to revitalise the higher education sector in India and to forge stronger linkages between industry and academia, the government has redefined the scope of 2% mandatory corporate social responsibility (CSR) contribution made by companies. Now, companies can spend their contribution on centrally funded and state-funded academic institutions, universities and incubators. These contributions can be made to public funded universities and IITs. It also includes national laboratories and autonomous bodies under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR),** Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Department of Science and Technology (DST), and ministry of electronics and information technology.

NIN launches portal to provide accurate nutritional info on foods

23 October 2019 / Telangana Today

Hyderabad: In a unique experiment at engaging with general public on all aspects of nutrition, Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) has launched the National Information Communication and Education (NICE) portal, specifically aimed at providing access to vast amounts of content related nutrition over the internet. Educational videos, printable material based on a host of aspects on nutrition, access to free mobile apps and providing nutritional information in 10 different languages developed by NIN in collaboration with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) Hyderabad are part of the NICE portal. The unique initiative is part of a concerted effort by NIN to engage with the community and provide accurate information related to nutrition. For the past one year or so, the premier nutrition-based research institute had launched several such initiatives aimed at establishing a direct line of communication with the general public. As part of these initiatives, for the first time, nutritionists from NIN in collaboration with **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** had launched an exclusive mobile application 'Nutrify India Now', which can be used as a personal dietician replete with Indian-specific data of nutritive value of all kinds of foods.

Indians will be infected with malaria, cholera and flu as part of new vaccination trials

23 October 2019 / ThePrint

New Delhi: Healthy human beings are likely to be infected with malaria, cholera, influenza, typhoid and other diseases as part of new trials meant to test the efficacy of preventive vaccines and curative drugs, ThePrint has learnt. The Ministry of Health, along with the Ministry of Science & Technology, is looking at adopting Controlled Human Infection Model Studies (CHIMS) — a concept popular in the West — in the hope of making medical research quicker and more accurate. "The model allows quick and efficient studies by using a small sample size of participants, said Dr Gagandeep Kang, a scientist who is often described as India's 'vaccine godmother' and is spearheading the project. "In these studies, products that are going to be failures will get the negative results early and expose fewer people to unsuccessful medical products," she added. "It will give us an opportunity to evaluate more drugs and vaccines quickly." Kang, the first Indian woman scientist to join the Royal Society, London, is working with the Ministry of Science and Technology, the World Health Organisation, the Ministry of Health, and the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**. She is also the executive director at Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), an autonomous institute under the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, The CHIMS plan is likely to be rolled out by the end of 2020, Kang said.

Ayush ministry to study efficacy of ayurvedic drugs in pregnant women

23 October 2019 / Outlook India

An apex body for Ayurvedic research under the Ministry of Ayush is all set to undertake a study to assess the efficacy of Ayurvedic drugs in pregnant women for management of anaemia and other complications. The study conducted by the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) will cover 9000 pregnant women. As part of the study pregnant women will be given medicines made of herbs, put on a specific diet and made to follow a particular lifestyle as per requirement to prevent various complications during pregnancy like edema, constipation, nausea, backache and control anaemia and attain normal birth weight of baby, Dr N Srikanth, Deputy Director General in the CCRAS said. One comprising 4,500 pregnant women will receive conventional ante-natal care under the existing national schemes of the government while the second group comprising of same number of women will be given Ayurvedic medicines, diet and lifestyle advocacy along with conventional ante-natal care regimen. The current study has been based on a pilot study conducted on 2,465 pregnant women in Himachal Pradesh by the CCRAS in collaboration with the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and the state government in 2000-2005.

Tobacco labs to undertake research on product constituents

23 October 2019 / Livemint

The National Tobacco Testing laboratories apart from testing tobacco samples for nicotine will also undertake relevant research and generate scientific data on products' constituents and explore ways of safe disposal of tobacco related wastes.

The officials in union ministry of health and family welfare have said that the research work has to be done as stipulated in Article 9 and 10 of Framework Convention of Tobacco Control (FCTC) of World Health Organization (WHO). The laboratories are mandated to test products suspected to contain tobacco or its variants in violation of identified The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 or COTPA, 2003 and food safety laws. Such products are often have been seized by government authorities for violation of provisions of various laws of the country or for analysis ordered by any court of law. "The tobacco testing laboratories are now actively engaged in the tobacco testing. They have recently picked up random samples of pan masala brands in Bihar in which they found nicotine in all of the 12 samples. The government is looking at the quality of laboratories to make them at par with the international standards. The laboratories will also look at trace elements for further research and their waste disposal as well," said Ravi Mehrotra, Chief Executive Officer at Indian Cancer Research Consortium, **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR),** Department of health research, union health ministry said.

Ayush ministry to study efficacy of ayurvedic drugs in pregnant women

23 October 2019 / Daily Pioneer

An apex body for Ayurvedic research under the Ministry of Ayush is all set to undertake a study to assess the efficacy of Ayurvedic drugs in pregnant women for management of anaemia and other complications. "The normal birth weight of a new born ranges between 2.7 and 3.2 kgs. To ensure that the baby attains this normal birth weight, mothers are given given six different types of Ayurvedic medicines. The expected outcomes of the study are reducing complications in pregnant women and their babies," Srikanth said. he current study has been based on a pilot study conducted on 2,465 pregnant women in Himachal Pradesh by the CCRAS in collaboration with the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and the state government in 2000-2005. "The outcomes of the previous study were encouraging. We managed to achieve the normal birth weight of babies, there was significant increase in haemoglobin levels in mothers and deliveries were normal ones with lesser number of complications. "To introduce these Ayurvedic interventions and medicines in the National health care delivery, studies have been conducted on a larger population for creating tangible evidences," Srikanth said

Delhi's AQI Improves As Pollution Decreases, Still In Poor Category

23 October 2019 / Republic World

Delhi's pollution level is decreasing as the air quality in the national capital seems to be improving. The national capital and its adjoining areas witnessed some improvement in the air pollution levels on Wednesday as the Air Quality Index (AQI) was 211 in the morning. According to Skymet Weather, despite the change in wind direction to westerlies/north westerlies, the pollution levels have decreased as the wind speed remained moderate in the range of 15-20 kmph. Skymet is a private weather forecast agency. According to the locals in the national capital, they have been feeling less suffocated in the morning. A local Dutta Sutra said that he felt "better and less suffocated". Further, he praised the Centre and the state government for creating awareness among people about air pollution. Another local, Kanhaiya, stated that the air clean and stubble burning has also reduced. According to a study by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, about 4 lakh deaths in India in 2017 were due to air pollution. There were 6.7 lakh deaths due to outdoor particulate matter air pollution and 4.8 lakh deaths due to household air pollution. According to reports, the highest PM2.5 exposure level was in Delhi, followed by the other north Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana.

70% of tainted veggies had banned pesticides

24 October 2019 / Times of India

You rinse your veggies before cooking — rather than soaking them in lukewarm water — to quickly rid them of pesticides. You may have to sacrifice speed to protect your health. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) tested 1,739 vegetable samples from Gujarat and found that 251 had pesticide residues. Of the tainted samples, 176 — almost 70% — had residues of 'non-approved' or banned toxic pesticides. In 51 samples, the FSSAI found pesticides exceeding permissible limits. The report, 'Monitoring of Pesticide Residues at National level', was released on October 19. Three national-level laboratories in Gujarat participated in the study. They were the labs of Anand Agricultural University; National Dairy Development Board, Anand; and **Indian Council of Medical Research**-National Institute of Occupational Health, Ahmedabad. Vegetable samples were collected from towns and cities including Ahmedabad, Dabhoi, Rajkot, Khambhat, Padra, Ankleshwar, Anand, Vadodara, and Kadi. Vegetables collected for sampling were brinjal, okra, tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, green chilli, capsicum, cucumber, green peas, and bitter gourd.

New guidelines released for nano drugs evaluation

24 October 2019 / The Hindu BusinessLine

The Minister for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences and Health and Family Welfare, today released guidelines for evaluation of nano-pharmaceuticals, which are emerging as more potent tools for treating various diseases. The document, which covers all the aspects of evaluation from the definition and categorisation of nanopharmaceuticals to pharma covigilance of the new set of therapeutics, has been prepared as a joint project by the Department of Biotechnology in the Ministry of Science and Technology, and **Indian Council of Medical Research** and Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Nano-pharmaceuticals, which are derived by application of nanotechnology in medical therapeutics are expected to bring about a revolution in treatment strategies as they would enable target specific delivery of drugs and therapeutic molecules and thus offer higher efficacy and lower toxicity in many disease conditions. They are expected to be great use particularly in cancer treatment.

Guidelines released for evaluation of nano drugs

24 October 2019 / Down To Earth

The Minister for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences and Health and Family Welfare, on October 24, 2019, released guidelines for evaluation of nano-pharmaceuticals, which are emerging as more potent tools for treating various diseases. The document, which covers all the aspects of evaluation from the definition and categorisation of nano-pharmaceuticals to pharmacovigilance of the new set of therapeutics, has been prepared as a joint project by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) in the Union Ministry of Science and Technology, and **Indian Council of Medical Research** and Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation in the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Nano-pharmaceuticals, which are derived by application of nanotechnology in medical therapeutics are expected to bring about a revolution in treatment strategies as they would enable targeting specific delivery of drugs and therapeutic molecules and thus offer higher efficacy and lower toxicity in many disease conditions. They are expected to be of great use particularly in cancer treatment.

Keeping fit: Tough, but not impossible

24 October 2019 / Deccan Herald

As per the latest report from the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR),** 13.5 crore Indians are obese, 7.2 crore are diabetic and 8 crore are struggling with hypertension. Realising the need for a fitness movement, the Fit India Movement was launched on August 29, 2019 by Prime Minister Modi. Although the PM emphasised that Indian culture has never been indifferent to physical fitness, today, the situation is not quite the same. Today, technology has hooked people to their gadgets and prevented them from engaging in physical activities. There are several other challenges that plague the implementation of the Fit India movement. However, having a balanced diet is not easy, people need to be alert while purchasing daily supplies for cooking. It is important to discuss the condition of people living below the poverty line. Due to a lack of choice and minimal access to resources they are bound to eat limited cereals, making many prone to disorders related to poor diet and malnutrition like Kwashiorkor and Marasmus. Government bodies must think about ways to reach out to sections of the society that cannot afford dairy products, fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. Data from the National Health Profile of 2017 established that only one million doctors are available to treat a population of 1.3 billion. Only 10% of doctors provide services to the public health sector. India's public health system is experiencing a major crisis. Although the government has launched the ambitious Ayushman Bharat Yojana, there is a dire need to make an attempt towards allocating medical services to people in need.

DBT releases guidelines for evaluation of nanopharmaceuticals

24 October 2019 / Outlook India

Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday released guidelines for the evaluation of nanopharmaceuticals, a move that is intended to provide transparent, consistent and predictable regulatory pathways in the area. The guidelines are developed by Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. They are the outcome of inter-ministerial efforts coordinated by the DBT. Nanocarrier based targeted drug delivery is an emerging field with the introduction of nanopharmaceuticals in the market. These nanoformulations have higher efficacy, lower toxicity and are safer than the conventional drugs. Indian researchers would be facilitated to undertake research in line with the regulatory guidelines and it is expected that industry will be keen to participate from the beginning of the research pipeline towards product development and commercialisation, a statement said. Speaking at the event, Vardhan said these guidelines are intended to provide transparent, consistent and predictable regulatory pathways for nanopharmaceuticals in India.

India develops regulatory guidelines to promote nano-pharmaceuticals

25 October 2019 / Business Today

India has developed technical guidelines to evaluate nano-pharmaceuticals for regulatory approvals in the country. The guidelines, released by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday, are expected to aid translational research towards development of novel nano-formulations that are more efficacious, less toxic and safer than conventional drugs. Nano-formulations are not entirely new drugs but medicines that have better quality because of the technology-led delivery mechanisms that are used to make its administration in the body more effective. There are no internationally accepted uniform guidelines for nano-pharmaceuticals. The usual consensus for evaluation of quality, safety and efficacy of nanotechnology-based products is to have a case-to-case approach. It takes into account the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of the nano-material used and the product, route of administration, the indication for which the product is intended to be used and other related aspects. The Indian guidelines also advocate the similar approach. S Eswara Reddy, Joint Drugs Controller said that the guidelines, a joint effort by the department of biotechnology, **Indian Council for Medical Research** and Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, become critical as there is no strict regulatory pathway to assess the quality of the product by the health ministry at the moment. "Nanotechnology intervention has opened a new horizon for targeted delivery of approved drugs and repurposing of drugs. Every year several new nano-pharmaceuticals are being introduced into the market globally.

Climate Change Tracker: Running on fumes

25 October 2019 / Livemint

One of India's key pledges at the Paris Agreement of 2015 was to reduce the economy's energy intensity and the share of fossil fuels in electricity generation. The fact that this is to happen while the country urbanizes on an unprecedented scale—some 400 million more people will be living in Indian cities by 2050, according to the UN department of economic and social affairs—makes India a unique development case study. In light of the fact that most urban infrastructure in the country is yet to be built, how livable are India's cities? Take air quality, for example. According to a March report by the organization Greenpeace, 22 of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India, all of them in north India. For example, Delhi's average concentration of the pollutant PM 2.5 was 113.5 for 2018, which is hazardous (the safe limit is 60, according to National Ambient Air Quality Standards). Nor is this just a north Indian problem. A 2017 report on the impact of air pollution on deaths and life expectancy in India, jointly prepared by the **Indian Council of Medical Research,** Public Health Foundation of India and Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, presents some interesting data. Among states with a high socio-demographic index (i.e. richer states), Kerala, where the air is six times less polluted than Delhi's, the risk of death per 100,000 population due to air pollution is still higher than Delhi.

With regards,

Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi
Information Interface Officer/PRO
Indian Council of Medical Research-
Department of Health Research
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
proicmr@gmail.com, syed.adil@icmr.gov.in
Ext. 286, Phone. 26589130