



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

Date: 18.9.23

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

To Undertake Multisite Research Study to evaluate the effectiveness of flu and pneumococcal vaccines in reducing respiratory infections and antimicrobial use in the elderly populations

Overview

The impact of vaccinating the adults against vaccine-preventable diseases in terms of health, social and economic benefits is being increasingly recognized, especially post Covid-19 pandemic. The population over 50 years is expected to represent 27% of the projected population in India in 2036 out of which 13% population will be over 60 years. Elderly people suffer from dual medical problems, i.e., both communicable as well as non-communicable diseases. A decline in immunity with age leads to increased risk of infections in the elderly like pneumococcal infection, influenza, tetanus and herpes zoster.

The upper respiratory tract infections (URTI) are among the major causes of morbidity and mortality among the elderly and are responsible for a large number of deaths and hospitalizations. Incidentally, they also account for major portion of antibiotic prescriptions especially in developing countries, thus fuelling the already ongoing crisis of antibiotic resistance. Vaccines for many of these respiratory infections are now available globally, including our country, and can be used as a tool to reduce impact of these diseases as well as strengthen our fight against antimicrobial resistance. Influenza immunization is associated with a decrease in antibiotic use, and pneumococcal vaccines reduce the carriage and transmission of antimicrobial-resistant strains of pneumococcus. There are several barriers to adult immunisation, even when available, including lower vaccine confidence, cost, lack of awareness and limited access to vaccines. Unfortunately, there is no national immunization schedule for the elderly population in India till date. Adult vaccination guidelines favoring pneumococcal and influenza vaccination have been issued by the Geriatric Society of India, the Association of Physicians of India, the Indian Medical Association and other professional bodies. Adult vaccination was highly encouraged during the Covid-19 pandemic and this provides an opportunity to extend the benefit of available vaccines and vaccination to adults, elderly and the at-risk populations.

Research question to be addressed
<i>Are the flu and pneumococcal vaccines effective in reducing the burden of these respiratory infections and antimicrobial use in elderly populations?</i>

ICMR invites EOIs from research institutions to conduct studies to evaluate the effectiveness of vaccines for flu and pneumonia in reducing infections and subsequent antimicrobial use in susceptible population. The selected researchers shall be invited to develop a full research proposal and roll out the multisite research project under the guidance of ICMR, Hqrs. The process of development of protocol and research project implementation shall be reviewed by an independent expert group constituted by ICMR.

Objective:

To assess the effectiveness of flu and pneumococcal vaccines available in India in reducing respiratory infections and antimicrobial use in elderly populations

The PIs must submit a comprehensive research proposal after including the following details:

Study design: The study will be a prospective randomized controlled study wherein the vaccines in question will be given to the elderly adults from both rural and urban areas across different states of India. The details of the sampling design, inclusion and exclusion criteria, process of data collection and analysis, follow up plan and duration must be clearly mentioned.

Target population: The proposal should mention the age group and region targeted.

Intervention: The details of the vaccines to be used

Control: The plan for selection of controls should also be provided

Outcomes: The details of the outcomes to be measured/recorded should be included. Whether any molecular or immunological tests would be included as part of follow up.

Format of Expression of Interest (EOI) to be submitted

A. Name of the Senior Researcher (Principal Investigator):

B. Name of the Institute:

C. Address with email id and phone no. of PI:

D. Type of Organization:

- Government
- Private
- Non-Government Organization

E. List of publications in last 7 years (since 01-01-2017)

In prescribed format (Annexure-I) for PI/CoPIs proposed for study should be included, where she/he was the First/last/ corresponding author). Highlight the impact of each publication e.g. inclusion in policy/protocol/programme etc.

F. List of research projects undertaken in last 5 years (since 01-01-2019) in prescribed format (Annexure- II)

G. Collaboration with ICMR or contribution to ICMR activities in last 5 years (maximum 250 words).

H. Rationale of proposed study including the choice of sites (states and districts) to be included where the implementation shall be carried out

The proposal should clearly state the rationale for the study, the recommended sites, which are likely to be relatively more vulnerable due to reasons of geography, socio-economic or cultural disadvantage, may be preferentially included.

I. Implementation Strategy

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

J. 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.

K. 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 final protocol and research project implementation.

L. Illustrative Budget outline (additional to the 2-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, kindly provide an estimated budget outline (no budget justification required at this stage) under the following headings: staff, recurring, contingency, data management, travel and equipment.

M. One-page CV of the principal investigator and other key investigators (additional to the 2-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
 - Upto five most relevant previous publications
 - Experience in undertaking projects on immunization from the public health perspective

Review process:

The EOI applications will be evaluated and screened by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) team 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 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/ Hospitals/ Universities/ Medical Colleges/ Government and semi-government organizations and NGOs (documentary evidence of their recognition including a DSIR certificate should be available).

Points to be kept in mind while submitting the EOI

- The EOI must address the specific research question that is mentioned in the call text.

- Collaborative, multi-centre, interdisciplinary, innovative research initiatives from the applicant will be encouraged
- Descriptive studies, systematic reviews and secondary data analysis will not be considered
- Should focus on outcomes that are translatable into policy.
- Foreign collaboration is not allowed under this 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/SKDzTHKhxVnvB2zb9>

Timeline

Activities	Date
Release of Call	20 th September, 2023
Last date for submission of EOI	30 th October, 2023
Shortlisting of EOIs	30 th November, 2023
Proposal Development Workshop	20 th December, 2023
Submission of a full proposal	15 th January, 2023

For any queries related to the call, please contact:

Dr. Kamini Walia,

Scientist G,

ECD Division, ICMR Headquarters,

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Annexure-I (list of publication since 01-01-2017)

Title of publication in AMA style	Impact factor of journal	Name of policy/programme/ protocol document

Annexure-II (list of projects since 01-01-2019)

Short title of the project	Primary objective (in brief)	Type of study (e.g. RCT / Prevalence/Lab-based)	Sample size	Grant amount	Time period