

Brief note on the COVID-19 related activities carried out at ICMR-NICED, Kolkata

1. NICED-VRDL is a regional centre for testing clinical samples for COVID-19 for the state of West Bengal. During earlier days of the pandemic, NICED-VRDL also provided diagnosis support to north-eastern states, Jharkhand, Odisha, Sikkim.
2. In addition of testing, NICED-VRDL provided training to the staff of all Govt. (both State and Central) and non Govt. organizations in the state. It also acts as quality control and quality assurance centre for other testing labs of the state of West Bengal.
3. NICED is one of the ICMR's validation lab for validating COVID-19 RT-PCR kits and RNA Isolation kits. As of May 15th 2020, 5 RT-PCR kits and 3 RNA Isolation kits have been validated and results have been forwarded to ICMR/NIV.
4. It is also one of the regional Depot of ICMR for storage and distribution of diagnostic kits and reagents to labs in eastern zones. The states under NICED Depot are West Bengal, Jharkhand, Tripura and Sikkim.
5. On the directives of EMR Division, Ministry of Health, Govt. of India, Dr. Alok Kr. Chakrabarti, Scientist E, NICED became member of Central RRT and supervised the Implementation of Cluster Containment Plan, Microplan and hospital preparedness for COVID-19 since 18th April, 2020 to 1st May, 2020 alongwith other team members.
6. Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) of SARS CoV-2 virus from the clinical samples has been carried out in collaboration with NIBMG, Kalyani and IISC, Bangalore and jointly published research article:
 - i) A. Maitra, M. Chawla Sarkar, H. Raheja, N. K. Biswas, A. Singh, S. Chakraborti, S. Ghosh, S. Sarkar, S. Patra, R. K. Mondal, T. Ghosh, A. Chatterjee, H. Banu, A. Majumdar, S. Chinnaswamy, N. Srinivasan, S. Dutta, S. Das. First Report of Mutations in SARS-CoV-2 Viral RNA Identified in Eastern India: Possible Implications for the Ongoing Outbreak in India and Impact on Viral Structure and Host Susceptibility. Journal of Biosciences Vol 45 2020; In Press.

Other article published by ICMR-NICED :

 - ii) Biswas A, Bhattacharjee U, Chakrabarti A. K, Tewari D. N, Banu H and Dutta S. Emergence of Novel Coronavirus and COVID-19 : whether to stay or die out? Critical Reviews in Microbiology. 2020 April; <https://doi.org/10.1080/1040841X.2020.1739001>.
7. NICED is involved in other research studies as a site of ICMR funded multicentric projects
 - a) District Surveillance for COVID-19 in the state of West Bengal
 - b) Nationwide Serosurvey for COVID-19 infection.
8. NICED scientists have submitted research proposals in collaboration with IIT's, DBT Institutes, Universities to the national funding agencies for developing potential vaccine, anti COVID-19 molecules and diagnostic assays.
9. NICED is included as one of the study sites for the study entitled "Multicenter, Phase-III, Double-Blind, Randomized, Placebo-Controlled Study to Evaluate the Efficacy of Recombinant BCG VPM 1002 In Reducing Infection Incidence and Disease Severity of SARS-COV-2/COVID-19 Among High-Risk Subjects" funded by Serum Institute, Pune.