



Help us to help you
Message from Resident Medical Officer

PAGE 2

Challenges of meeting the blood transfusion requirements

PAGE 3

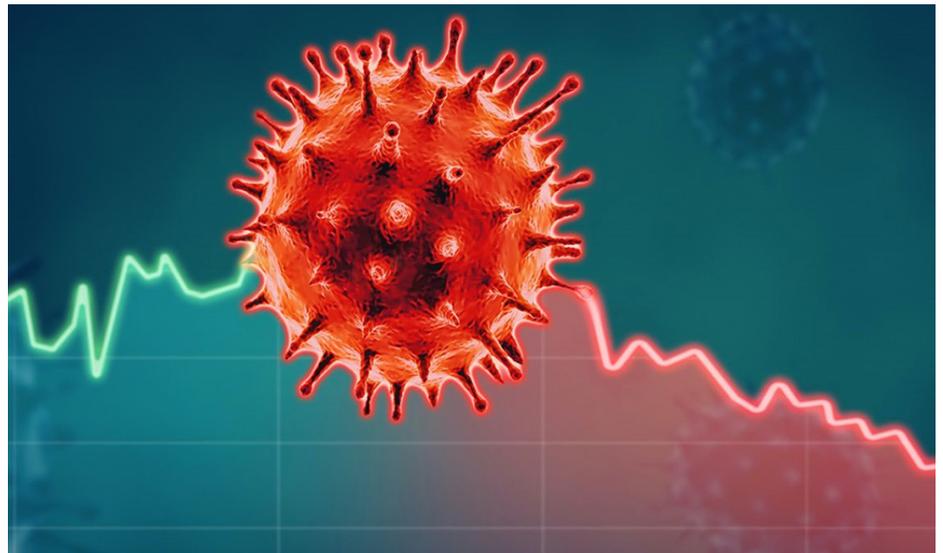


Measures & Activities

PAGE 5

India's recovery rate crosses 40% mark

India has been relatively able to decelerate the pace of COVID-19 and the impact can be seen in the data of COVID-19 cases. Compared to the global scale, where there are 62.3 cases per lakh, India still has only 7.9 cases/ lakh population. Similarly, for mortality per lakh population, while the global average rate is 4.2, India's figure is pegged at 0.2. The



25000 samples tested at NIMHANS

As many as 25000 samples have been tested for COVID-19 at the NIMHANS laboratory so far, out of which 440 have come out positive.

Last week, India reached a landmark in its fight against COVID-19 by performing 100,000 tests in one day. Starting from less than 100 tests per day just two months ago, a 1000 fold increase in just 60 days was made possible by dedicated teams from research institutions, medical colleges, testing laboratories, ministries, airlines and postal services working together.

In January 2020, India had only one laboratory testing for COVID-19, at the Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute of Virology, Pune. Today there are 555 laboratories across the country, performing molecular tests for diagnosis of COVID-19 - an unparalleled achievement in the history of the Indian healthcare system, according to ICMR.

relatively low death figures represent timely case identification and clinical management of the cases.

According to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the focus on clinical management and recovery has resulted in the improvement in the recovery rate. About 41.39% of the confirmed cases have recovered bringing the total to 51,783 recoveries, as of 23rd May 2020. This is a reminder that the disease is curable and the clinical management protocols adopted by India are effective.

It is observed in the recovery data that about 2.9% of all active cases under management require Oxygen support; about 3% of the active cases under management require ICU

support and 0.45% of the active cases under management require ventilator support. India has concurrently been focusing on upgrading COVID dedicated health infrastructure.

As we transition through Lockdown 4.0, it is important to be mindful of making appropriate COVID behaviour an integral part of our lifestyle which will essentially include regular hand washing and hand hygiene, usage of masks/face covers, physical distancing, taking care of the old and most vulnerable to the disease, self-protection through boosting of immunity following Ministry of AYUSH guidelines, installation of the Aarogya Setu app, and to adopt a health seeking behaviour through timely reporting of symptoms and care seeking for COVID-19 treatment without attaching any stigma.

COVID-19 Cases	Confirmed	Deaths
India	138845	4021
Karnataka	2089	42

* as on 25 May 2020 (8.00 am)

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

Revised Guidelines for Testing

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has issued new guidelines updating its strategy for COVID-19 testing. The revised strategy proposes all symptomatic contacts of laboratory confirmed cases and healthcare workers to be tested.

All symptomatic patients with Influenza-like Illness (ILI) and patients who develop ILI symptoms should also be tested. Besides, asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts of a confirmed case are to be tested once between day five and day 10 of coming in contact, the new document stated. Asymptomatic contacts of a confirmed case were being tested once between day five and day 14.

ICMR has now recommended the TrueNat COVID-19 test as a two-step test: step one i.e. E gene screening assay for all COVID-19 suspect samples to be followed by step two for the RdRp based confirmatory test in all E gene positives. This fully indigenous diagnostic platform offers a reliable and affordable option to augment the SARS-CoV-2 testing capacity in India.

The platform comprises a TrueNat machine, inbuilt RNA extraction system, RT-PCR chips, collection swabs and viral lysis medium (VLM). Single assay has a turnaround time of 35-50 minutes for 1-4 samples with a total of 12-48 samples being tested per day, depending upon the type of machine.

The biosafety and biosecurity requirements are minimal in view of the sample being collected in viral lysis medium (VLM), which inactivates the virus. The test can be used at the level of district hospital or primary health centres. ■

Message from Resident Medical Officer

COVID-19 has swept across the world and reached pandemic proportions. Never have we witnessed a global health crisis of this magnitude in the recent past.

During these uncharted and uncertain times, our doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers on the frontline have displayed exemplary grit and unwavering commitment. Their hard work and dedication shine as a beacon of hope, inspiring us to go the extra mile during the crisis.

NIMHANS has chalked out standard operational procedures and guidelines to assist the staff at the frontline of public health action. It has also ensured that all the frontline warriors are provided with adequate personal protective equipment to fight the battle against the pandemic.

The hospital administration, in concurrence with the clinical departments of the Institute, is all set to resume its OPD services in a graded manner from 1st of June 2020, after nearly two months of lockdown. Only patients with prior appointment, scheduled through IVRS, are advised to attend the OPD. We realise that this may cause inconvenience to patients who do not have proper access to technology, but the hard decision has been taken in view of the prevailing situation.

Fortunately, no single case of COVID-19 has been reported at NIMHANS so far. But this is no

reason to be complacent. Recent stats have raised new alarm bells about the pandemic and experts have warned that the worst is yet to come.

We are closely monitoring the outbreak and the rapidly evolving situation. Dedicated teams of professionals are leading our preparedness and response efforts, in consonance with up-to-date guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

We have initiated all possible infection control measures to protect non-COVID patients and healthcare workers. Preparations are on in full-swing for setting up a screening facility at the OPD to identify and segregate COVID-19 suspects or patients with influenza-like-illness (ILI) symptoms before they are sent to the relevant departments.

Before we take the next big step, I would like to express deepest gratitude to all the NGOs and good Samaritans for their generous donations of protective gears, food and other essential supplies.

Kudos to all the faculty and staff of the Institute, especially the frontline warriors, for keeping the NIMHANS flag flying high. I look forward to your continued cooperation, enthusiasm and dedication.

Dr. Shashidhara H.N.
Psychiatrist (Specialist Grade)

Challenges of meeting the blood transfusion requirements

Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, which was first detected in Hubei Province of China in December 2019, is continuing its spread across the world. The first case of COVID-19 in India was reported on 30th January 2020, and since then the epidemic has expanded its footprint in the country. The Union Government's response in tackling the spread of the disease and imposing a 21-day nationwide lockdown on March 24 was quicker than other country. The lockdown has been extended further till 31st May 2020, but a number of restrictions that were in place earlier have been relaxed.

All activities barring essential services were stalled during the first two phases of the lockdown. This had a great impact on blood transfusion services across the country. All scheduled voluntary blood donation camps had to be cancelled in the beginning of March due to closure of IT companies and educational institutes. The National Blood Transfusion Council released Guidelines for blood transfusion services in light of COVID-19 pandemic on 25 March, 2020 itself. However, voluntary donations were stopped as there was no movement of donors allowed in view of the lockdown.



Donor screening area

The demand for blood components had decreased initially, but once the emergency surgeries increased the requirement was same as before the COVID-19 outbreak. To meet the demand of blood and its components during the lockdown period, Transfusion Medicine Centre, NIMHANS came up with vital strategies for collection of blood. Effective use of social media including Facebook and WhatsApp and donor recruitment through NGOs like Sankalp India Foundation and NIMHANS staff helped in timely collection of sufficient amount of blood. Karnataka government-initiated

donor pickup and drop facility was put in place using 108 ambulance services in four zones of Bengaluru under National Health Mission. The TMC also started pick-up and drop services for blood donors. A roster was prepared for each department and section of NIMHANS and the staff of departments were requested to come forward and donate blood according to the given schedule. So far, 75 staff members of NIMHANS have donated blood and helped patients during the crisis. Voluntary blood donation camps have also resumed and 207 units have been collected through camps. Activities for blood collection and voluntary donation are carried out judiciously, ensuring compliance with social distancing norms and infection control guidelines. Though there is partial relief in lockdown, maintaining adequate blood reserves still remains a challenge. Hoping for the best is the remedy for every setback we experience. "Once you choose hope, everything is possible!"



Blood collection site of camp



Donor waiting area

Dr. Parmatma Prasad Tripathi^a

Dr. Vijay Kumawat^a

Dr. Vani Santosh^b

^a Assistant Professor, Transfusion Medicine & Haematology

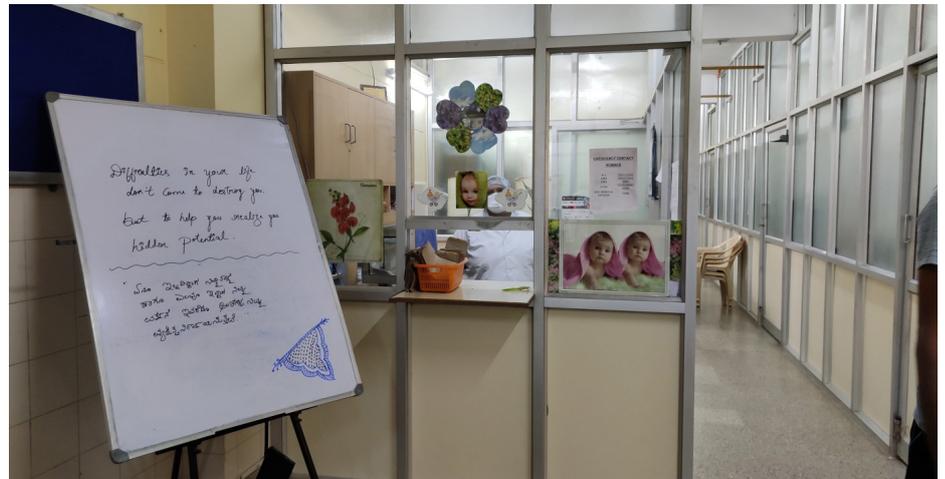
^b Professor & I/c Head of Department, Transfusion Medicine & Haematology

Voices from the ground: NIMHANS Health Centre

NIMHANS is committed to providing extraordinary care not just to its patients, but also to the employees of the Institute and their immediate families or dependents.

In the wake of COVID-19 outbreak, stringent infection control measures have been implemented by the NIMHANS Health Centre, better known as staff clinic among the Institute community. These measures are necessary and intended to curb the spread of the disease. This is also done to optimize the effectiveness in caring for those who need medical services.

“The staff clinic is functioning without any hindrances. During the initial days of the lockdown period, people were a tad apprehensive about visiting the clinic. This is quite common in such evolving situations. However, things are gradually getting back to normal. Effective infection prevention measures adopted by the centre and constant awareness about the disease seem to have allayed their



fears,” Dr. Giri Sagar, Medical Officer, NIMHANS Health Centre.

Adequate and frequent environmental cleaning of facility floors, followed by proper disinfection, are ensured in the clinic. The cleaning staff have been trained on the recommended procedures and decontamination practices.

“Standard operating procedures and protocols are strictly followed.

Medical instruments, chairs, door handles and other touch points are cleaned and sanitised regularly. The employees who come to the centre are well-disciplined, and adhere to social distancing norms and other public health hygiene recommendations,” he says.

“Prevention is always better than cure. It is vital to be vigilant by taking all precautionary measures. Let’s all stay strong and fight the pandemic,” he adds. ■

Behind the scenes...

Doctors and nurses have been rightly hailed as heroes in the stiff battle against COVID-19. But there is another group that works in the background to help maintain a safe and clean environment in hospitals — like the cleaning or the housekeeping staff—which rarely gets the recognition it deserves.

The cleaning staff at NIMHANS are striving hard to ensure patients, healthcare workers and other employees remain safe amid the pandemic. Mr. Shivakumar D., who has been working as Hospital Assistant at the Casualty of NIMHANS for about two decades, says, “We consider this an opportunity rather than an obstacle or a challenge, as we know our role is crucial in protecting patients and the employees. We are proud of our work. Our team is dedicated and

they feel like they are part of the core frontline group.”

For him and the committed team, many of the cleaning practices remain the same. However, they are cleaning public areas, such as waiting rooms, and isolation wards more often than before. “We are paying extra attention to those critical areas. We use surgical masks, gloves, caps, goggles and gowns while performing our duties. While working in isolation areas or dedicated Coronavirus wards and some extraordinary situations, we use sophisticated masks and complete protective gear,” he says.

“We have been trained in proper usage of protective gears and protocols for cleaning the environment. We are taking every precaution to ensure myself and all other co-workers are safe,” he adds.





Measures & Activities

- IVRS-based tele outpatient services have been launched from 6th May 2020 for registered patients. The patients who have consulted previously with NIMHANS can dial 080-26991699 on working days, between 9 am and 12 pm, to avail follow-up and allied services. If prescription is needed, it will be sent as a web link to the registered mobile number.
- NIMHANS is gearing up to resume OPD services in a phased manner. Patients should take prior appointment through Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) to avail OPD services. A screening area will be set up to identify and segregate patients having symptoms of influenza-like illness and COVID-19.
- Infection Control Team, Hospital Infection Surveillance System, Dept. of Neuromicrobiology has initiated various new IPC measures. COVID-19 scoring form has been revised and self-monitoring forms for health care providers exposed to suspected COVID-19 patients made available in NHS. Various source control points have been identified in the hospital and administrative block.
- Security personnel have been trained to check surface body temperature (thermal scanner) and peripheral oxygen saturation (finger pulse oximeter). Environmental disinfection protocol of the Institute has been formulated and training on IPC practices has also been conducted by the ICT for housekeeping personnel working in hostel and administrative block.
- Mobile-based application for assessment of mental health issues among migrant workers, quarantined individuals and general public has been developed by Telemedicine Centre in collaboration with IIT-B, Bengaluru and the Government of Karnataka, as part of the Mental Health Care Management System (MHMS) Project. The app is at the beta-testing phase.
- The national 24/7 helpline (080-46110007) launched by NIMHANS on 29th March, has so far provided counselling on mental health and psychosocial issues to about 50,000 callers, in collaboration with various institutes across the country.
- The Department of Neurosurgery started telephonic consultations for follow-up patients on 22nd April. After the telephonic consultation, the patients were given a short questionnaire and the feedback was taken. According to the feedback garnered, 94% of patients were very happy at being called from the department.
- Teleconsultation for the follow-up of neurology patients has been initiated. These patients are being contacted through their registered phone numbers and enquired regarding their present condition.
- The Department of Clinical Psychology continued to offer brief tele-psychotherapy sessions as per the need to pre-registered patients whose therapy sessions were halted due to lockdown. During the last week, 353 such patients were contacted and tele-sessions were conducted for 303 of them by Clinical Psychology teams across various units.
- The Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry has initiated the tele-follow-up services for recently discharged in-patients (from 27th April). On a prior appointment basis, the tele-follow-up consultation services were provided to families who have consented.
- A total of 19 video consultations were carried out for the registered patients as part of the Tele Aftercare Services last week.
- Transfusion Medicine Centre, NIMHANS has initiated voluntary blood donation drive (from faculty and staff) to maintain sufficient stocks of blood during crisis. Blood is collected according to the National Blood Transfusion Council Guidelines by taking adequate precautionary measures.
- Emergency Services are functioning 24 x 7 without interruption. The services have been enhanced by posting additional staff and residents for better triaging and reducing congestion. Laboratory and diagnostic/imaging services continue to function, as any services related to the national effort to mitigate COVID-19.

We Care Enough To Notice, ASK & Listen

Let Us
Reach out to connect

To break through the prisons of
suffering alone

Let us Stay Distant - to Protect
&

Yet Engaged to Uplift

This is the Time to
Give & Receive More of Ourselves

To Connect more deeply
To be Present emotionally

&

To Light our Inner Worlds
with a sense of
Belongingness & Care

Time To Be There

- A panel discussion on “Emotional resilience and balance during stressful times” was organized by EBSCO Information Services on 19th May. The panel included Dr. Thomas Kishore, Additional Professor, Dept of Clinical Psychology, NIMHANS (title of presentation: Emotional Resilience in uncertain times) and Dr. Paulomi M. Sudhir, Professor of Clinical Psychology (title of presentation: Managing difficult emotions in uncertain times: Strategies and implications). A total of 1880 academicians from different parts of the country participated.
- Dr. Poornima Bhola, Additional Professor of Clinical Psychology, participated in a session on “Balancing Employee Mental Wellbeing and Productivity” as a resource person, held as part of the online programme “Corporate Employee Health & Wellbeing in the Reboot Era of COVID-19” by Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and Arogya World on 19th May.
- The PsychCare Q and A Online Forum for psychological support developed jointly by the Department of Clinical Psychology, NIMHANS and IIT-B, Bengaluru has recorded 3692 visitors in less than a month after its launch.
- An online survey on ‘Psychological preparedness for pandemic (COVID-19) management: Perception of nurses & nursing students in India’ has been initiated by the Department of Nursing. A total of 550 nurses/nursing students have been roped in for the study so far.
- Online guided yoga practice sessions for stress management during COVID-19 have been started by the Department of Integrative Medicine, NIMHANS. From 18th to 23rd May, a total of 157 persons took part in the training.



Patient Feedback

Respected Dr Gangadhar Sir,
Yesterday I visited Nimhans Emergency centre. I brought our domestic helper's husband () due to his brain stroke. He is a building construction worker. He was given very good care and he underwent decompression procedure. Today he is been shifted to wards. Dr. diagnosed him initially and patient was referred to Surgery department. What I saw in Nimhans was Doctors and all health professionals putting very sincere efforts and treating patients with lot of compassion. The place was kept very clean and my first experience in Nimhans was excellent. I salute you sir for leading the hospital to serve patients with great care and empathy. Regards

Together we can fight Coronavirus

For further information:

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