

Beat: News

India Takes A Lead In TB Research In A Unique Mission Mode To End TB

Quality Diagnosis And Treatment

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USPA NEWS - The Secretary (DHR) and DG, ICMR, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan briefing the media on ICMR's initiative with the International TB Research Consortium, in New Delhi on November 10, 2016.

Aim Is To Ensure That All TB Patients Get Assured Quality Diagnosis And Treatment

Tuberculosis (TB) is one of India's severest health crises. It kills two Indians every three minutes and more than 1,000 people every day. India has the highest TB burden in the world. The Global Tuberculosis Report 2016 released in October 2016 by the World Health Organization updated the estimate of incidence "" that is, the number of new tuberculosis cases in a year "" to 2.8 million in 2015. The updated estimate of tuberculosis deaths, excluding deaths of HIV-positive people, is 478,000 in 2015 and 483,000 in 2014.

The "India TB Research and Development Corporation" (ITRDC), a flagship initiative by ICMR, aims to bring together all major national and international stakeholders to develop new tools (drug, diagnostics, vaccines) for TB. The vision of the corporation is "To achieve Elimination of TB from India by investing in new tools (drugs, diagnostics, vaccines) as well as provide these solutions to the world."

Elaborating on the initiative, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, DG (ICMR) stated that under the guidance of the Prime Minister, TB has been taken as a national priority. The aim is to reduce the incidence on new TB cases by 95 per cent and reduce mortality by 95 per cent. She also stated that research will be accelerated to improve cure rates and to accelerate decline in new cases. She added that implementation research will focus on finding and framing strategies to treat TB patients by involving all stakeholders. The aim is to ensure that all TB patients get assured quality diagnosis and treatment.

The initiative has been undertaken after a consensus from the various Government, Non-Government and international research organizations in a high level meeting with officials from MOH&FW, DBT, CSIR, DST, TDB, WHO, Gates Foundation in Feb 2016 wherein all the members agreed to support the Corporation. The concept also has an in-principle by PMO for setting up a new entity.

In a few months' time the detailed landscape analysis of the national and global leads in four thematic areas namely diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics and implementation research has been done and most advanced leads have been identified for taking forward. The first International Scientific Advisory Group (ISAG) meeting was convened on 9th and 10th November in New Delhi bringing together the eminent international and national TB experts from four thematic areas. The ISAG consisted of 6 international experts and 3 experts from India.

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