

IMTECH takes up sample testing for Covid-19

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New Delhi, April 03 (India Science Wire): Covid-19 has posed several challenges to the healthcare sector. The limited number of test kits for Covid-19 is one such challenge. As of now, India has been primarily testing patients with a travel history. However, the rate of testing should improve in terms of testing per million population.

To boost its testing capacity, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Institute of Microbial Technology (CSIR-IMTECH) has stepped up to take up Covid-19 sample testing. This is in line with the directives issued by the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India and the advisory issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to operationalise Covid-19 testing by laboratories under CSIR and other labs affiliated to Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

“The initiative of ICMR to involve all government-accredited labs is a welcome step and will be a game changer in testing of Covid-19 samples. This would increase the testing rate among suspected patients. In the initial phase, IMTECH plans to operationalise capabilities to carry out testing of 50 to 100 samples a day, which can be subsequently ramped up as and when required,” said Dr Sanjeev Khosla, Director, IMTECH, Chandigarh.

The institution has augmented its capabilities to carry out clinical testing for COVID-19 and has the necessary expertise in molecular microbiology. The lab has the requisite infrastructure including Biosafety Level (BSL)-3 facility as the labs are advised to take all appropriate biosafety and bio-security precautions before testing. A newly constructed BSL-2+ virology lab equipped with Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) equipment has also been established. All the mandatory approvals required for testing of clinical samples have been obtained to operationalise testing at the earliest.

Apart from testing of clinical samples, CSIR-IMTECH is also supporting healthcare professionals by providing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to prevent them from contracting any infection while serving patients. The institute is also extending help to the local administration and Red Cross Unit of Chandigarh by providing the logistical and infrastructure support. (India Science Wire)

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