

CSIR IGIB and IIT Alumni Council sign MoU for joint research to tackle COVID-19

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New Delhi, Jul 09 (India Science Wire): Nearly all countries in the world have speed up their research efforts on novel coronavirus. In this context disease research and patient data analysis are key elements. To work on these important aspects Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) and IIT Alumni Council announce a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for COVID-19 disease research and patient data analysis.

The joint research by CSIR-IGIB & IIT Alumni Council will focus on catalysing the creation of an ecosystem for diagnostics and therapeutics for COVID-19 as well as flexible platforms for pandemic preparedness. The ecosystem will enable an indigenous value chain with multidomain expertise spanning digital health, artificial intelligence, molecular diagnostics, next generation sequencing, antibody harvesting, and production of monoclonal antibodies.

IIT Alumni Council has handed over the first set of 8500 patient imaging data from Mumbai to IGIB, which will soon be made available in deidentified form, through a public open data platform co-hosted by IGIB and ICMR to enable research.

Both parties are viewing this partnership as an opportunity not only to create a world leading testing and treatment ecosystem in the country but also to establish global data leadership. “This would enable open data access to every scientist and innovator in the world for development of bleeding edge testing and treatment solutions. IIT Alumni Council believes that together with IGIB, we shall be able to create a robust high security Data Architecture for health Data” said Ravi Sharma, President and Chief Volunteer, IIT Alumni Council.

This partnership will help in two of IIT Alumni Council two initiatives – World’s largest MegaLab in Mumbai for testing and India’s largest MegaTx antibody facility for treatment based on biologics. “This partnership will open the doors for newer forms and formats of collaboration between the Govt and domestic non-profits like IIT Alumni Council. One can see it as a data and engineering social initiative driven by volunteers, which would be of much use to the biomedical community” said Sharma.

“The key element of this MoU is that IIT Alumni Council is generating a lot of data from their charitable work that they would like to make public in a secure and ethical way through us” said Dr Anurag Agrawal, Director, CSIR-IGIB. Members of CSIR-IGIB and IIT Alumni Council have been brainstorming regarding areas of testing and treatment for COVID-19 since April 2020. (India Science Wire)

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