

India to Enhance Natural Defence Against COVID-19

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New Delhi, April 23 (India Science Wire): Natural defence mechanism of the body (innate immunity) plays a key role in the fight against COVID-19 and other viral infections. While the world is working towards developing vaccines and antiviral agents for the management of COVID-19, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has decided to repurpose an approved immunomodulator called *Sepsivac* to enhance innate immunity of the body to limit the spread of COVID-19 and fasten the recovery of COVID-19 patients.

Sepsivac is expected to protect the close contacts of COVID-19 patients and health-care staff by boosting their innate response and thereby preventing them from acquiring the disease. It can be effective to provide quicker recovery to the hospitalized COVID-19 patients, who are not critically ill. *Sepsivac* could also prevent the progression of disease wherein patients will need ICU management, say CSIR scientists.

New clinical trials are now approved by the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI). These will be randomized, double-blind, two-arm, controlled clinical trials. These clinical trials are in addition to the recently announced trial on evaluating the efficacy of the drug for reducing mortality (deaths) in critically ill COVID-19 patients.

Sepsivac contains heat-killed Mycobacterium W (Mw). It is found to be extremely safe in patients and no systemic side effects are associated with its use. *Sepsivac* was developed under the New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI) program of CSIR and is manufactured by Cadila Pharmaceuticals Ltd., Ahmedabad.

Natural defense mechanism is a fast, first and efficient immune response for identifying and eliminating COVID-19 and other viruses. Cells of human immune system like Macrophages, NK cells offer such protection. The majority of persons coming in contact with COVID-19 or other viruses either do not get the disease or get a milder form of the self-limiting disease as innate immunity is adequate. (India Science Wire)

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