

DBT

Workshop to upskill COVID testing facilities

By Sunderarajan Padmanabhan

New Delhi, April 15: Department of Biotechnology's Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) is holding a workshop to bring frontline workers, especially scientists, clinicians and lab technicians, dealing with the COVID19 crisis up to date on the various aspects involved in the diagnosis of the infection.

The programme will focus on a better understanding of structural details of SARS-CoV-2 virus, the real time PCR platform that is used for detection of the virus, the practical requirements of the facilities and personal protective equipment needed in a diagnostic lab. The programme will, among other things, focus on the precautions that need to be taken while handling samples.

Narendra Chirmule, CEO of SymphonyTech Biologics, which is a data analytics company focused on engineering solutions to biology, will begin the session with a presentation on the structure and biology of the virus. As former Head of R&D at Biocon (Bangalore), and leadership positions in Amgen (Thousand Oaks, CA) and Merck Vaccines (West Point, PA), he had contributed to clinical development of vaccines and biopharmaceuticals. His drug development experiences include landmark vaccines for cervical cancer [HPV], shingles [Varicella zoster], childhood diarrhea [Rotavirus]), and biologics for osteoporosis (Prolia), rheumatoid arthritis (Enbrel), platelet loss (NPlate), breast cancer (Ogrivi) and gene therapy using viral vectors.

He will be followed by Archana Bharadwaj Siva, Principal Scientist, Head Business Development & Human Resource Development Group and Coordinator (Skilling/Trainings) at CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology. She will dwell on the biosafety and biosecurity precautions that need to be followed.

Kalpna Joshi Professor & Head, Dept. of Biotechnology, Sinhgad College of Engineering (SCOE) will talk about the real time PCR platform used for SARS-CoV2 diagnosis and data interpretation. Dr Joshi headed in-vitro biology group at Pharma R and D, besides giving consultancy to pharma companies like Glenmark, Matrix, Hyderabad and Orchids, Chennai. She has expertise in molecular biology, stem cells biology and immunology.

The workshop is for scientists, clinicians, Lab Managers/In-charge and Technicians from government and private laboratories approved for COVID19 testing. The course will be conducted through a ZOOM

platform on April 16. It is being organised by Center for BioPharma Analysis and BIRAC BioNest/  
Bioincubator at Venture Center, Pune.