

## **DBT-NABI scientists plan to develop Smell based test for COVID-19**

New Delhi, May 15: Rapid spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the concern over viral transmission by patients with minimal to no symptoms underline the importance of identifying early or subclinical symptoms of Covid-19 infection. Two such candidate symptoms include anecdotally reported loss of smell (anosmia) and taste (ageusia). Although in its infancy, smell/taste loss in Covid-19 may help facilitate screening and early isolation of cases. Every Indian is aware of the household smell/odor that is associated with the characteristic smell of herbs/spices commonly present in our kitchens. Using an understanding of chemosensory mechanisms, researchers at DBT-NABI plan to develop an economical, rapid (a three-minute) odour test. The idea is that the test can determine the identification, discrimination and thresholds of odour perceptions (can be positively related to taste loss) which on validation, may be an early indication of COVID-19. This test has the potential to be one of the scanning tests along with temperature sensation (infra-red thermometer) at the entry points of hospitals, government and private offices, malls and other places of public dealing. The above work will involve collaboration between DBT- NABI and PGIMER, Chandigarh.