

DBT's NCCS tests over 10000 samples for COVID 19 in ten weeks

The Department of Biotechnology's Pune based institute, the National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS) began testing samples for SARS-CoV-2 on 25th April, 2020 to facilitate the ongoing COVID-19 surveillance. Institute has achieved a milestone of testing over 10,0000 samples for Covid 19 in last 10 weeks.



DBT's NCCS tests over 10000 samples from Maharashtra for COVID 19: Crosses a major milestone.

It was approved as a diagnostics facility by the DBT, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Maharashtra State Government. Extensive and speedy preparations were made by this government research institution, including repurposing some of its laboratories to serve as a testing centre, procurement of supplies like PPE and kits, formulating and validating a standard operating procedure (SoP), getting technical and scientific staff trained at ICMR-NIV for COVID-related biosafety measures and sample testing, registering the facility with the appropriate authorities, and conducting mock testing.

Initially, fewer samples were sent to this centre from within the Pune district of Maharashtra. However, with Maharashtra being the worst affected state in India, a large number of samples are required to be tested every day. Therefore, the centre experienced a surge in the numbers of samples received, in early May, and started receiving many samples from other districts of Maharashtra as well. Undaunted by this task, the team at this centre accelerated and doubled its efforts, frequently testing over two hundred samples per day. Within less than a month and a half, this centre tested its first 5000 samples.

Speeding up efforts further, DBT-NCCS tested 5000 more samples in just a month, and crossed a major milestone by completing over 10000 tests in a total of ten weeks. This was

made possible only by the tireless, diligent and persistent efforts of several scientists and technical and other staff, who have been working long hours, seven days a week. Furthermore, NCCS has also provided guidance and assistance to other research organizations, such as IISER-Pune and ARI to set up COVID testing facilities on their respective campuses. A short video shared on the NCCS social media and website offers a glimpse into the activities of the diagnostics team. Updates are also posted on the website and social media of DBT-NCCS, to keep the public abreast of the activities of this testing centre.

The timely and much-needed support provided by ICMR-NIV, the Armed Forces Medical college, and the B. J. Medical college in Pune, and the Directorate of Medical Education and Research, in Mumbai, have been invaluable in successfully initiating and implementing the activities at NCCS. The financial requirements were primarily met through the intramural funds of NCCS from the Government of India, and partially supported by Lupin Ltd, and Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd. The Director of NCCS, Dr. Manoj Kumar Bhat, is thankful to the scientific staff, technical staff and their families for their constant support in NCCS's contribution towards this national cause.

Links: https://twitter.com/DBT_NCCS_Pune/status/1280840051736248320

Facebook link: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DBT-National-Centre-for-Cell-Science-509782325747597/photos/?tab=album&album_id=3213425358716600

Website: <https://www.nccs.res.in/index.php/Events/Covid>

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/lCgBoPiZNu4>

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