

WebGyan Session on ‘City-scale agent-based simulators for the study of COVID-19 spread’

At DBT’s Institute for Stem Cell Science & Regenerative Medicine (inStem), Bengaluru, fourth session of the COVID-Gyan’s WebGyan series was held by Prof. Sandeep Juneja, School of Technology and Computer Science, TIFR-Mumbai. His talk City-scale agent-based simulators for the study of COVID-19 spread focussed on forecasting the spread of COVID-19 epidemic and understanding the impact of various non-medical interventions that are of obvious importance to policy makers and general public both. He mentioned that agent-based simulation models have turned out to be a powerful tool for arriving at such scenario analysis of epidemic spreads. The strength of these models is that they capture the detailed population interactions in a region at a granular level and provide a great deal of flexibility in modelling complex strategies and interventions.



In this talk he also addressed the different epidemiological models, their utility, the issues related to computation, parameter estimation, and model validation. He further mentioned the IISc-TIFR city-scale agent-based framework for comparing various "unlockdown" strategies with special focus on his study on Mumbai, e.g., modelling of local train services and containment zones in Mumbai, importance of compliance, and the impact of the graded openings of workplaces on the city medical infrastructure. The inStem is one of the founding partners of [COVID-Gyan](https://www.covid-gyan.in/), a pan-institutional website that has been proactive in COVID-19 outreach efforts.

This session was live streamed on [COVID-Gyan YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) and was moderated by Prof. Rajesh Gopakumar, ICTS- Bangalore and Dr. Mukund Thattai, NCBS. This session was recorded on June 18, 2020.

Sundowner Session on ‘Scicomm: What's the New Normal?’

COVID-Gyan website not only aims at creating general public awareness about COVID-19 through infographics, posters, research articles, podcasts/videos, etc., but also at providing support to the wider community during this crisis. The Sundowner Sessions that started during Lockdown 1.0 conducted in collaboration with Bangalore Life Science Cluster (BLiSc) every week focuses on various topics relevant to the current scenario.

On June 16, 2020, the Sundowner Session focused on the topic ‘Scicomm: What's the New Normal?’ relevant to many in our community. The guest speakers were Dr.Karishma Kaushik from Pune University, Kollegala Sharma from CFTRI, and Prof. R Ramanujam from IMSc. They discussed about science communication, and how they envision the role of science communication in India with the COVID-19 pandemic and in future. Addressing the currently existing gap between science and research, and its reach to commoners, the discussion focussed on usage of all forms of available media like TV, radio, newspapers to digital forms like social media and blogs – to maximize the outreach efforts. Introducing kids and young minds to inculcate interest in science and usage of vernacular languages to convey science and research at grass root level were some of the prime focus of this session too. This 90 minutes’ session is available on the [COVID-Gyan YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLAygbmDnm5LBp7SoQafDwg).

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLAygbmDnm5LBp7SoQafDwg>

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