

DBT-inStem holds outreach webinar on 'Immunology of COVID-19'

New Delhi, Aug 03: The Department of Biotechnology's Institute for Stem Cell Science & Regenerative Medicine (DBT-inStem) is one of the founding partners of COVID-Gyan, a pan-institutional website that has been proactive in COVID-19 outreach efforts. It has, among other things, been holding webinars on various aspects of the pandemic.

The sixth session of the COVID-Gyan's WebGyan series featured a talk by Dr. Shahid Jameel, an eminent virologist and the CEO of the Wellcome Trust DBT India Alliance. The topic of the session held on July 23 was 'Immunology of COVID-19' and focused on the immune response to SARS-CoV-2, how it links to protection from disease, exacerbation of disease, and the implications for therapy and future COVID-19 vaccines.



Dr. Jameel began the session by sharing a video, titled 'COVID-19 Immunology 101 for Non-immunologists' prepared by Dr. Akiko Iwasaki of Yale University, USA followed by citing the numbers of the pandemic as they stand today globally and then focusing on Indian states. He also highlighted differences in progression with examples of urban hubs such as Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru; structure of the viral genome; nature of infection and disease transmission, types of possible vaccines (DNA, RNA, viral vector etc). and the current status of SARS-CoV-2 vaccines. He noted that the coronavirus family carries proof-reading activity, so the virus strains don't change as fast as other RNA viruses.

He applauded the dedication and relentless work of the scientific fraternity towards the R&D effort in fighting COVID-19 and emphasized that vaccines, once released will be used based on need and severity especially for frontline workers like medical practitioners, followed by

senior citizens and co-morbid groups and so on. He reiterated the need to practise personal safety by wearing facemasks and avoiding public/crowded spaces. He concluded his talk by stating that more pandemics will affect the human race due to mindless human interference with nature in the form of deforestation, wildlife trade, and global warming and stressed the need to promote a sustainable, healthy, and eco-friendly lifestyle.

The 100 minutes session was moderated by Prof. Rajesh Gopakumar, ICTS- TIFR, Bangalore and Sandhya Koushika, TIFR-Mumbai. It was live streamed on COVID-Gyan YouTube channel. The session attracted more than 100 registrations and nearly 300 online viewers and was recorded on July 23, 2020. It can be watched [here](#).

Link: <https://instem.res.in/>