

COVID-19-related efforts of DBT/Wellcome Trust India Alliance

Webinar on COVID19: Ask The Experts

With the advent of COVID-19 pandemic, there has also been an 'infodemic' - viral spread of misinformation and fear. In such times, the role of journalists, media professionals, community reporters and science and health communicators assumes immense importance. India Alliance, Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI, Faridabad), IAVI and Nature India have partnered to bring together a series of webinars where experts answer questions about COVID-19. The following topics have been covered at these webinars: COVID-19 biology, vaccines, research opportunities, public health impact, bioethics, best practices in fact-checking and reporting a pandemic. So far, 4 webinars have been organised in this series.

In **Part 4** of this webinar series, organised on 17 April 2020, Dr Soumitra Pathare, Consultant Psychiatrist, Director, Centre for Mental Health Law & Policy, ILS Pune, Ida Jooste, Global Health Media Advisor, Internews, Padma Priya, Advocacy and communication specialist, Co-founder and Editor, Suno India discussed the 'Role of Language in times of a Pandemic'.

The role of language in communicating risk in a public health emergency is critical and has a far-ranging impact on affected populations. The webinar covered the following topics: (i) Talking about a pandemic without spreading fear and stigma - what should communicators know and understand? (ii) The role of metaphors in shaping public understanding and human response. What have previous pandemics taught us in this regard? (iii) Humanising a pandemic, (iv) Talking to different public groups about the pandemic, and (iv) Key considerations for shaping the public discourse around the pandemic.

To watch the full webinar click:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXL2MYMz5bk&feature=youtu.be>

Preparation of resources for awareness by India Alliance fellows

Tavpritesh Sethi and his team at IIIT Delhi have developed an android application **WashKaro** to share information on good hygiene and sanitation practices and a webpage and consortium to raise awareness on COVID-19.

To learn more about their app, and to connect and collaborate on Covid-19 awareness-raising, click: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2003.07074.pdf>