

Abbott, YRGCARE team up to track HIV, Hepatitis patterns

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Healthcare company Abbott and Chennai's YR Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education have entered into a partnership to study the country's viral diversity to improve the accuracy of diagnostic tests for HIV and Hepatitis.



Strengthening India's efforts in combating HIV and hepatitis viruses, Abbott has announced its partnership with Y.R. Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education (YRGCARE) to study the country's viral diversity to improve accuracy of diagnostic tests.

Abbott will provide study protocol and diagnostic equipment and YRGCARE will help in screening and sequencing rich patient data from infected populations in India.

HIV and viral hepatitis are among the biggest public health threats in India today as they can produce many genotypes, which keep combining to form recombinant strains or mutations making detection trickier.

Therefore, understanding the distribution of genotypes and recombinants is critical to the development of diagnostic tests.

With more than 2.1 million people living with HIV, India has the third largest HIV incidence in the world with a large part co-infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV).

People who inject drugs (PWID) and sex workers are identified as key affected populations for which the epidemic is growing.

Established more than twenty years ago, Abbott's Global Surveillance Programme spans 40 countries across six continents, identifying and characterizing more than 5,000 virus strains, ensuring that current diagnostic tests to detect a wide range of HIV and hepatitis viruses and determine the need for newer tests to stay ahead of evolving viruses.

India is the latest addition to Abbott's recent surveillance efforts in Asia-Pacific to provide new insights on the strains and transmission of these viruses specific to India.

Abbott is the only diagnostic test manufacturer with such a unique, longstanding and large-scale virus Surveillance Programme.

Besides India, Abbott has collaborated with partners in China, Australia, Vietnam, Laos and Pakistan to ensure its Surveillance Programme covers key regions.

In addition, Abbott works with commercial partners in Nepal the Philippines as well as the Red Cross in Thailand to gain access to circulating strains of HIV and hepatitis viruses, thus ensuring a real representation of the prevalent infections.