BioSpectrum the business of Bio & Health Sciences

George Institute partners with Oxford University

02 March 2020 | News

The workshop will result in the establishment of collaborations to tackle key questions in this domain

With the burden of diabetes increasing among people living in low- and middle-income countries, the incidence of deaths due to infection in hospitals are also on the rise. However, not much research has been done to evaluate the relationship between diabetes and infection.

The George Institute for Global Health India in collaboration with Oxford University has launched a unique diabetes and infection network to explore how real-world data sets can be used to evaluate the relationship between diabetes and infection in low and middle-income countries.

The first meeting of this newly created network was held at the George Institute for Global Health India office recently where researchers, clinicians, data scientists, health economists and ethicists from across the globe especially those working together on the intersection between diabetes and infection discussed how it is important to bridge the gap between infection and diabetes and how collection and analysis of real world data can enable knowledge sharing and pooling of resources to fight the diabetes-infection nexus.

Some of the organisations which are being represented at the two-day meeting included the Norway India Partnership Initiative; Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit-Thailand; Centre for Study of Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism, icddr,b, Bangladesh; Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine, India; Edinburgh University, UK Christian Medical College, India and Manipal academy of Higher Education, India among others.

Prof Vivekanand Jha, Executive Director, The George Institute for Global Health, India said, “The major burden of diabetes is now being felt in low-and middle-income countries where the incidence of diabetes is increasing rapidly. Diabetes accelerates susceptibility to infection and exacerbates outcomes for other infectious diseases like tuberculosis, melioidosis and dengue.”

The workshop will result in the establishment of collaborations to tackle key questions in this domain, and identification of specific funding calls to apply to for support,” he added.

Prof Susanna Dunachie, Associate Professor and Consultant in Infectious Diseases, Oxford University and Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit, UK said, “We hope that the diabetes and infection network will enable meaningful

engagement with stakeholders interested in this domain, both knowledge users as well as beneficiaries. This engagement will also integrate best practices in collating diabetes and infection data for research and promote innovations in data research. It will encourage the use of big data and artificial intelligence approaches to diabetes and infection and influence the funding landscape."

Prof S V Madhu, Director and Head of Department, Centre of Study of Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism called the coupling of tuberculosis and diabetes in countries like India a double whammy.

"The highest number of cases of tuberculosis associated with diabetes are reported from India," he added.

Over the past two days, participants discussed data sharing, statistical and modelling approaches to address bias when analysing real-world historic data, and how to develop expertise in LMICs to enable them to do research using large patient data sets.

Additionally, discussions centred around big data research platforms, ethics, data sharing, modelling and scope of large-scale studies, and the landscape in South and Southeast for research using electronic patient records.