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CCMB, Apollo Hospitals collaborate to develop cost effective COVID-19 test

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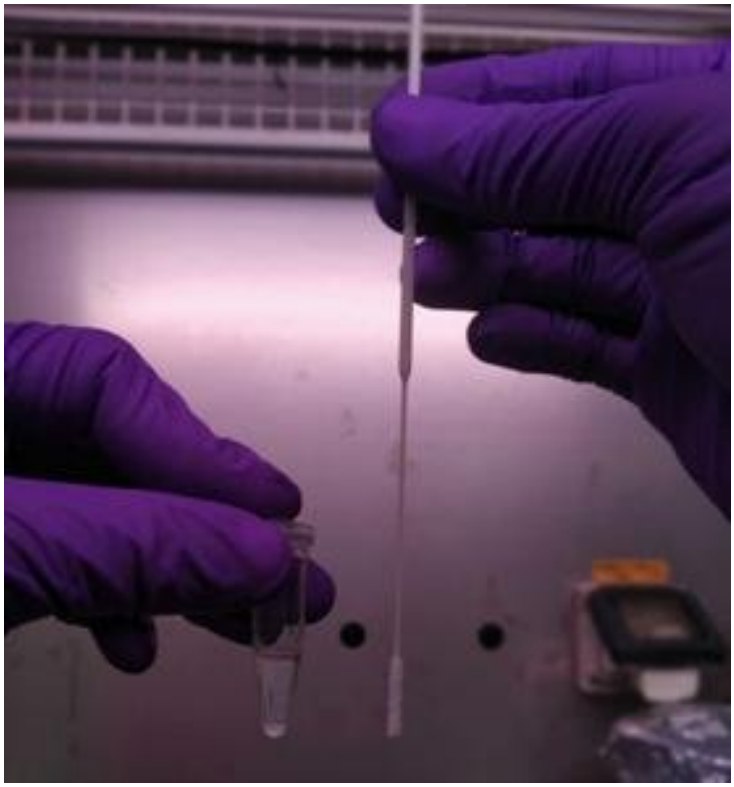
The rapid, safe, and cost-effective DArRT-PCR tests will be available nationally through the Apollo Hospitals network



CSIR-Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad and the Apollo Hospitals Enterprise have announced a collaboration for joint manufacturing and commercialisation of an innovative dry swab test, Direct Amplification rapid RT-PCR (DArRT-PCR) - for SARS-CoV-2 detection.

The test has been developed by CSIR-CCMB and the collaboration with Apollo Hospitals will focus on scaling up manufacturing and commercialisation of the tests jointly. The rapid, safe, and cost-effective DArRT-PCR tests will be available nationally through the Apollo Hospitals network.

The DArRT-PCR allows for rapid, safer, and more cost-effective SARS-COV-2 testing. The sample collection centres can send dry nasal or oropharyngeal swabs to testing centres with no need for the imported and expensive Viral Transport Medium. The biological sample can be directly isolated from the patient swabs, and testing using a one-step protocol. The current gold-standard method, on the contrary, requires many expensive reagents and steps that add to the expertise, money, and time required for the tests. The DArRT-PCR test reduces the time and human effort by 40-50% in the current setting of testing.

Dr Rakesh Mishra, Director, CSIR-CCMB applauded this collaboration and said, “Cheaper, rapid, and easy to use tests as these are the need of the hour. With Apollo and its vast network of hospitals and health services, we are positive about impacting many lives towards better health.”

Dr Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Group said, “We are glad to collaborate with CSIR-CCMB in this path-breaking initiative of a more rapid, easy to use, and accurate testing option and work to make it available nationwide. These tests will give a boost to the efforts to mitigate the effect of COVID-19 and will play a major role in controlling the pandemic.”