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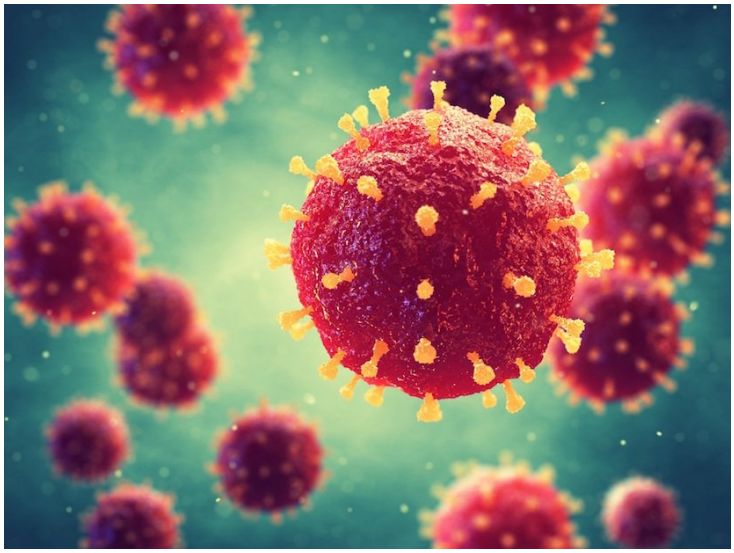
Health Ministry issues SOP in context to new UK virus strain

23 December 2020 | News

For Epidemiological Surveillance and Response in the context of new variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus detected in United Kingdom



Ministry of Health has issued SOP for Epidemiological Surveillance and Response for people flying from the UK. The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes the activities to be undertaken at the point of entry and in the community for all international passengers who have travelled from or transited through UK in the past 4 weeks (from November 25 to December 23, 2020). Any reference to testing in this SOP implies RT-PCR testing only.

Passengers testing positive will be isolated in an institutional isolation facility in a separate (isolation) unit coordinated by the respective State Health Authorities. Necessary action to send the samples to National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune or any other appropriate lab for genomic sequencing will be initiated at the facility level. If the genomic sequencing indicates the presence of new variant of SARS-CoV-2 then the patient will be kept in the separate isolation unit and treated as per the clinical protocol.

Those who are found negative on testing with RT-PCR at the airport would be advised quarantine at home. Prior to check-in, the traveller will be explained about this SOP and in-flight announcements must also be made.

International travellers from the UK who arrived in India since last one month will be contacted by District Surveillance Officers and monitored in community.

State Governments/ Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme will ensure that all the contacts of those travellers from the UK or transiting through the UK in last four weeks will be traced and monitored. They will also be tested as per protocol.