

India launches SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortium to monitor viral mutations

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The consortium will ascertain the status of new variant of SARS-CoV-2 (SARS-CoV-2 VUI 202012/01) in the country and establish a sentinel surveillance for early detection of genomic variants with public health implication.



The government has launched the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG), comprising 10 labs namely DBT-NIBMG Kalyani, DBT-ILS Bhubaneswar, ICMR-NIV Pune, DBT-NCCS Pune, CSIR-CCMB Hyderabad, DBT-CDFD Hyderabad, DBT-InSTEM/ NCBS Bengaluru, NIMHANS Bengaluru, CSIR-IGIB Delhi, and NCDC Delhi.

The overall aim of the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium is to monitor the genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2 on a regular basis through a multi-laboratory network. This vital research consortium will also assist in developing potential vaccines in the future. The consortium will ascertain the status of new variant of SARS-CoV-2 (SARS-CoV-2 VUI 202012/01) in the country, establish a sentinel surveillance for early detection of genomic variants with public health implication, and determine the genomic variants in the unusual events/trends (super-spreader events, high mortality/morbidity trend areas etc.).

Dr RenuSwarup, Secretary, DBT, informed that INSACOG will have a high level Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee which will provide guidance and oversight to the consortium specially for policy matters and it will have a Scientific Advisory Group for scientific and technical guidance.

The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) will monitor the genomic variations on a regular basis through the multi-laboratory network. Knowledge generated through this vital research consortium will also assist in developing diagnostics and potential therapeutics and vaccines in the future.

DBT-NIBMG as the Co-ordinating Unit of Genome Sequencing Consortium will closely work with a Nodal Unit of NCDC on activities like SOPs, data annotation, data analysis, data release etc. NCDC will maintain a database of all samples of the new variants of public health significance.