

Merck donates Rs 1.7 Cr to IIT-B for COVID-19 research

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Supports development of clinical tests for COVID-19 disease severity assessment



Merck has announced a donation of Rs 1.7 crore over two years to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay to support the development of clinical tests for COVID-19 disease severity assessment.

The funded project is an ongoing COVID-19 multi-omics research on the development of simple immunoassays based on single-molecule counting technology to identify low levels of early disease severity markers.

Sunil Punjabi, MD, Life Science Business, Merck India said, "With this donation, Merck is aiding IIT in the early identification of COVID-19 virus severity to facilitate appropriate healthcare management which will help to relieve the pressure that has been put on the healthcare system in the country."

The research aims to dissect the host response signatures during COVID-19 disease progression, identify clinically relevant biomarkers, apply mass spectrometry-based approaches, and translate the findings to allow the prognosis of COVID-19 patients.

The partnership will focus on five areas, including:

- Biomarker discovery of COVID-19 severity at an early phase of infection
- Immunoassays for the detection of biomarkers using single-molecule counting technology
- AI-driven short-listing of COVID-19 biomarkers for prognosis using immunoassay panel
- Immunoassay panel development for detection of biomarkers using single-molecule counting technology
- Pathway enrichment-driven computational studies on drug repurposing for COVID-19 therapies

Photo caption: (L to R) Pankaj Kumar Joshi, Head of Commercial Marketing, Research Solutions for India, Merck, Sunil Punjabi, Managing Director for Life Science India, Merck, Prof. Suhas Joshi, Dean Alumni and Corporate Relations, IITB and Prof. Sanjeeva Srivastava, Professor Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering, IITB