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India Health Fund backs development of novel collection device for testing TB in children

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The flavoured low-cost device will require children to simply chew and blow or cough for easy and safe sample collection of oral fluids



India Health Fund (IHF), a Tata Trusts initiative, has announced its funding and support for a first-of-its-kind lollipop- and chewing gum-inspired sputum collection device for testing tuberculosis (TB) among children.

Being developed by Coimbatore-based startup 221B Biomedical, and christened ‘Blow-Pop’, it will help address lakhs of under-, mis- and delayed diagnosed cases of TB among children. The unique child-friendly sample collection device is expected to be ready for roll-out over the next two years.

India Health Fund’s latest grant to 221B Biomedical will pave the way for development and clinical validation of 221B Biomedical’s simulated method. The innovation is a low-cost device that will improve the safety, efficacy, and ease of sputum collection for TB in children. Inspired from a lollipop, and chewing gum user experience, the conch-shaped device needs children to simply chew and blow or cough for easy sample collection of oral fluids. Moreover, owing to its simplicity, the tool will be ideal for low-resource settings, including primary healthcare setups.

While this tool will be developed initially keeping children in mind, a similar product can be used among adults too, and its development and deployment will be explored.