

Health Ministry to release indigenous TB test

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An indigenously developed diagnostic test called Truenat test for effective case detection of Tuberculosis (TB) will soon be rolled out by the Union Health Ministry.

Multi-centric studies have been carried out to validate this point-of-care (POC) molecular diagnostic test. It has also been found to be comparable with internationally approved molecular diagnostic tests, as stated by the country's apex research body—Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

The Tuberculosis Research Consortium (ITRC), formed by the ICMR, convened its second International Scientific Advisory Group (ISAG) meeting this week in New Delhi.

While a Cartridge-based Nucleic Acid Amplification test (CBNAAT) has been successfully rolled-out as a tool to detect drug resistance, it remains expensive and largely inaccessible as a front-line TB test.

India has relied heavily on smear microscopy technology (the traditional, manual Sputum smear diagnosis of TB) for decades, and case detection continues to be a major gap in the cascade of care.

ISAG suggested that all patients testing positive for TB by POC test, may also be tested by another nationally endorsed rapid test for diagnosing drug resistance TB. The committee also recommended a cost-effectiveness analysis and optimization of the POC test for rifampicin (commonly used antibiotic to treat TB) resistance.