

Press release

India can still achieve TB elimination target by 2025

NEW DELHI – December 5, 2020 – The International Institute for Human Development, India (IIHD India) and Indian Association of Respiratory Care (IARC) organized a live seminar to deliberate on how to ensure continuity of TB Care in COVID19 crises.

Dr. Ruchi Sogarwal, Chief Executive Officer, IIHD India said, *“COVID19 has placed unprecedented demands and pressure on the health-system nationally and globally. Finding and treating patients with TB remain the fundamental pillars of TB prevention and care. Remote teleconsultation of the TB patients and use of various mhealth solutions self empower patients to access care and improve adherence. Today’s deliberations suggest that an effective and rapid response to both COVID-19 and TB treatment and management services should run simultaneously”*.

Dr. Jerry Paul, President, Indian Association of Respiratory Care said, *“Tuberculosis is one such chronic respiratory disease affecting millions of patients in India. It was once considered an incurable disease, which became a potentially curable disease with new drugs during the latter part of the last century. Unfortunately, it is becoming incurable again. Keeping this in mind the Government of India has announced its plan to eliminate TB by 2025 during the Union Budget 2017–2018. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has added on to this threat and limited the resources to tackle TB. A joint effort by the government, medical practitioners, respiratory therapists, society, and researchers at large is essential to take control of this disease.”*

Dr. Sunil Mehra, Executive Director at MAMTA Health Institute for Mother and Child, Delhi highlighted, *“India can still achieve TB elimination target by 2025 if we continue our efforts in strengthening the last mile while focusing on the real-time data for effective implementation of the planned strategies”*.

Dr. Asha Frederick, Joint Director of Medical & Rural Health Services, National TB Elimination Programme, Tamil Nadu highlighted the ‘door-step delivery’ approach in ensuring treatment management of TB patients during the pandemic. Likewise, the best practices and learning were presented by Dr. Sunil Kumar M, State TB Officer, National TB Elimination Programme, Kerala.

“Through meticulous planning including causal analysis and establishment of systems, highest political and administrative commitment, integration with other programs, committed staff at field, robust engagement of private sector, supportive supervision and motivation is helping us to detect cases while ensuring continuity of TB care in COVID19 times”, mentioned by Dr. Kamlesh Kumar Pandey, Consultant Pulmonologist at Wockhardt Hospital, Mumbai.

“Globally, we have seen the loss of life, witnessed how the poor are rendered jobless and homeless, their plight on way back to their villages as on foot returning migrants and loss in the global economy and health indicators. But COVID19 has taught us two big lessons – firstly, it is time to design people-centric solutions and secondly, use technology connect and mainstream the disconnected and unreachable”, mentioned by Subhi Quraishi, Director, ZMQ Development, Delhi.

While talking about the future technology solutions for TB management, Richard Featherstone, Director, Aerogen Asia Pacific, Ireland mentioned, *“Aerogen is the only closed-circuit aerosol drug delivery system that mitigates the transmission of patient-generated infectious aerosol and delivers effective aerosol treatment for COVID-19 patients. It is designed for the safety of both the patient and the caregiver. Multiple international guidance has been published outlining the use of this mesh technology in the treatment of COVID-19 patients”.*

Dr. Narayana Prasad, Co-Founder & Director, Public Health Literacy, Boston highlighted the significance of public health literacy in stigma reduction, which is different in TB patients than COVID19 patients.

“The seminar brings together policymakers, pulmonologists, anesthesiologists, respiratory therapists, civil society organisation, academia and research institutions across pan India representing Apollo Hospital, CMC Vellore, Fortis Hospital, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Amritha Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre, Manipal Hospital, Indian Council of Medical Research, AIIMS, D Y Patil Hospital, Bharathi Vidyapeeth University and many more”, said by Ms Madhuragauri Shevade, Associate Vice President, Indian Association of Respiratory Care.

About International Institute for Human Development (IIHD)

The IIHD India is a not for profit organisation committed for social impact, helps in supporting ideas, people and organizations in transforming their vision into reality. IIHD believes that strengthening ecosystem partnership is the most essential strategy for long-term and sustainable social impact, hence, the organization work as catalyst and aggregator to connect with/within Government, NGOs, corporate and professional associations, and academia and research institutions for skills/talent and solutions, primarily in healthcare and education sector. For details: <http://iihdindia.in>

About Indian Association of Respiratory Care (IARC)

IARC endeavors to promote excellence in the training and practice of Respiratory Therapy by competent and qualified respiratory therapists for the alleviation of suffering of those with respiratory ailments. The association has a strong presence in India as well as abroad with more than 1000 Respiratory Therapists and counting. IARC also has a its official journal, The Indian Journal of Respiratory Care (IJRC), that publishes research papers in Respiratory care, respiratory therapy and is read widely by respiratory therapists and all health care personnel dealing with respiratory care including pulmonologists, intensivists, anaesthesiologists, physicians, physiotherapists and critical care nurses. The association has a strong advisory board which includes professional from Anaesthesiology, Pulmonology, Internal Medicine, Intensive Care, Cardiology and Paediatrics. For details: <https://iarc.in/>

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