



INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Department of Health Research – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India

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(ICMR IN NEWS)

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Preface

The PR Unit/PRO office of ICMR since last one and half years have reached from (where is ICMR located) to (everyday mention of ICMR and DG ICMR in National Media). This change from where to why signifies the media visibility and importance of our organization within this stipulated time duration.

Every week Indian Council of Medical Research and Director General ICMR are mentioned by dozens of daily news papers, periodicals and magazines including online editions.

This week's reports (ICMR IN NEWS dated 4 May to 10 may 2019) includes the mention Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 15 news papers including top news papers such as The Times of India, Reuters, The New Indian Express, Millennium Post among others.

As an organization we first need to fill internal information vacuum at the headquarters as well as the Institutes for better visibility of ICMR which will pave way for complete dilution of external information gap between ICMR and external public including media, government and other related organizations.

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Countering the Diabetes Burden with Innovation : Dr. Vishwanath Mohan

May 4, 2019/ET Healthworld

As the diabetes capital of the world, India currently has about 72 million people with the disease and the number is expected to rise to a whopping 134 million by 2045. The prevalence is not just growing among the older generation but is now hitting the younger generation as well. According to a report by **Indian Council of Medical Research**, data in its diabetes registry show that one in every four people under 25 with diabetes in India has adult-onset type-2 diabetes, unlike before when type-2 diabetes was seen only in older adults or those with obesity. These statistics are not only worrying from a healthcare perspective, but also from an economic standpoint. What happens when the most productive section of society is affected by a lifestyle disease like type-2 diabetes, where poor diet and lack of exercise contribute to the onset of disease? Patients with diabetes are at risk for long-term complications (damage to the cardiovascular system, kidneys, eyes, nerves, blood vessels, and feet). The economy suffers, as people with diabetes have, on an average, two times higher healthcare costs than the ones living without the disease. This not only threatens the productivity level of our workforce but also means a significant loss of national income. While lifestyle changes such as improving diet and increasing exercise can help reduce the onset and progression of type-2 diabetes, treatment is generally required to reduce the risk of life-threatening complications. Healthcare dynamics have undergone a significant shift in the last few decades by some of the most advanced treatments offered by the healthcare industry. Innovations are changing the way disease burdens like diabetes are perceived and treated, not only saving lives but improving the quality of life for patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes.

Pandemic: Anaemia on the rise among Telangana women

May 4 2019/The New Indian Express

The prevalence of anaemia among women in Telangana is on the rise and the health pandemic demands serious attention from the State government. According to statistics made available by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the number of pregnant women detected with anaemia in the State was 6.77 lakh in 2018-19. In 2017-18, it was 5.92 lakh and just two years down the line in 2016-17, the number was 4.29 lakh. While Hyderabad recorded the highest number of detected anaemia cases, with 1.09 lakh cases in 2018-19, the large number could be attributed to the high population of the city. However, among the districts, Warangal (Urban), Sangareddy and Suryapet had the highest number of anaemia cases -- 38,318, 35,97 and 29,722 respectively. It may be mentioned here that a recent study on anaemia trends in India over a decade, from 2008-18, by an **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** researcher, has reported that Telangana has the highest percentage of women suffering with severe anaemia, wherein haemoglobin levels are less than 7g/dL. The study titled 'Temporal trends and differential patterns in the prevalence of severe anaemia in India: observations from country-wide haemoglobin determinations 2008-2018' published in 'Tropical Medicine and International Health' journal, reported that the percentage of women

with severe anaemia in Telangana in the year 2017-18 was 8.2 per cent, compared to 2-4 per cent in most of the states. Head of National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau and Scientist-G at the National Institute of Nutrition, Dr A Lakshmaiah, points out that food inadequacy is a major cause behind the high prevalence of anaemia in Telangana.



Going Electric

May 4, 2019/Millennium Post

Let's start with a few hard-hitting facts. First, air pollution accounted for 12.4 lakh deaths in 2017, finds a joint study conducted by **Indian Council of Medical Research** and Union Health Ministry. Second, 22 of the top 30 most polluted cities in the world belong to India, mentions data released by IQAir AirVisual and Greenpeace. Third, India accounts for 7 per cent of global CO2 emission and is the fourth highest individual emitter, claims Global Carbon Project. Moreover, emission may be doubled by 2030 as the country is building new coal plants and oil imports to keep rising with its growing population. India imports around 80 per cent of its crude oil requirement, and the bill, which was around \$88 billion during 2017-18, is likely to touch \$300 billion by 2030. All this sounds alarming. But, what are we doing to overcome this deep crisis? By 2030, India, under the Paris climate agreement, is obligated to reduce its carbon footprint by over 30 per cent of the 2005 level. So, while global discussions to save the environment have been in fashion over the last decade, India too has started thinking about it more seriously; and as obvious, when it comes to air pollution, vehicles are the first to face the brunt, which is understandable as they are one of the major pollutant contributors. Thus, the end result of all the pondering was a strategic plan – a plan to adopt all-electric vehicles for its transport system and stop the sale of fuel run vehicles by 2030. Which means that in less than 12 years, every vehicle on the nation's roads must be battery-powered. That is, more than 21 crore registered vehicles must be phased out to pave the way for an eco-friendly mobility system. Well, that's an ambitious plan! It does also look achievable on paper. But what about reality; shouldn't a goal also be realistic?

Unhealthy food habits among women lead to Anaemia

May 5, 2019/The Hans India

According to recent study by **ICMR** on anaemia trends in India from 2008-18 period, it has been reported that Telangana has the highest percentage of women suffering with severe anaemia According to World Health Organisation (WHO) , globally 38.2 per cent pregnant women are affected by anaemia. National Family Health Survey 2015-16, reports that 50.3 per cent of pregnant women in India, and 49 per cent of pregnant women and 57 per cent non-pregnant women in Telangana are anaemic. Anaemia is a condition in which the number of red blood cells or their oxygen carrying capacity is insufficient to meet physiological needs which may vary by age, sex, altitude, smoking, and pregnancy status. Lack of hemoglobin leads to iron deficiency, which causes anaemia and various other complications. Anaemia in pregnancy is associated with low birth weight and increased risk of maternal and prenatal mortality. It also suggested that iron intake in pregnant women of Telangana is very poor that is causing health issues on the baby like impairment of cognitive functions. Food inadequacy is high in the State among women of all age groups. As a result, the iron intake through food consumption is very low. Suggested diet consists of food items that are rich in iron.

Animal foods such as liver, red meat, fish, dates, jaggery, green leafy vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, Sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, are some such products that contain iron. Follow a diet that consists of Vitamin C such as amla, lime, and lemon, all citrus fruits such as oranges, musumbi, strawberries and guava. Vitamin C helps in the absorption of iron in the body.



10 things the doctor wishes you knew about your kidneys

May 6, 2019/Banaglore Mirror

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a growing health problem with an estimated prevalence of 11.5 per cent worldwide. With increasing life expectancy and prevalence of lifestyle diseases, the US has seen a 30 per cent increase in chronic kidney disease (CKD) with diabetes and hypertension accounting for over two-third of the cases. In India too, diabetes and hypertension account for over 40–60 per cent cases of CKD and as per Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) data, the prevalence of diabetes has risen to 7.1 per cent overall while in the urban population the prevalence goes as high as 28 per cent. Likewise, the reported prevalence of hypertension in the adult Indian population is 17 per cent. The SEEK study by Singh et al. studied urban and semi-urban Indian population and found 31.2 per cent to be hypertensives, 7.3 per cent to be diabetics and the prevalence of CKD stage 1-5 to be 17 per cent with 4.2 per cent of the population suffering from stage 3 CKD and above. Apart from diabetes and hypertension, the rest of the CKD burden is contributed by obesity and lifestyle, glomerular diseases, renal stone, infections and drugs.

Ten things to watch out for avoiding kidney ailments

- 1-** Stress and uncontrolled reactions increase blood pressure and blood sugar levels, which further lead to kidney damage.
- 2-** Smoking has serious effects on renal function and can be a leading cause of kidney disease. It also interferes with the medication for high blood pressure
- 3-** A high salt intake diet alters sodium balance, which may have detrimental effects on the kidneys.
- 4 -** High levels of sugar in the blood damage the kidneys and cause them to fail.
- 5 -** Lack of sleep may be a gateway to kidney disease.
- 6 -** A sedentary lifestyle increases the risk of kidney disease thereby multiplying other risk factors like obesity, high blood sugar and high blood pressure.
- 7** Spirit or alcohol results in high blood sugar levels, increasing the chances of kidney ailments.
- 8 -** Lack of awareness & pain killers: Poor awareness and the indiscriminate and unregulated use of over-the-counter painkillers and unscientifically prepared alternative medications also are a major cause of kidney diseases or contributors to worsening kidney function.
- 9 -** Diabetes /hypertension: People with family history of kidney disease or diabetes or high blood pressure need to be extra cautious and must go for regular check ups
- 10 -** Cardiovascular issues: People with cardiac issues are susceptible and therefore must keep their cholesterol well under control. They must include kidney testing annual health check-up.

City college to host faculty development programme

May 6, 2019/The Times of India

The Research and Development Cell, Nehru Group of Institutions, Coimbatore, will conduct a two-week faculty development programme from May 8 to May 21. Sponsored by the National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, the programme seeks to cater to faculty members of universities, engineering colleges, business schools, polytechnic colleges and entrepreneurship development institutions. The event would feature speakers such as senior adviser to Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, and additional director general of **Indian Council of Medical Research**. Angel investors and CEOs from the central government supported Technology Business Incubators would also participate in the programme and interact with the participants, said a release. Codissia president, professors from IIT-Madras, leading chartered accountants, advocates and successful entrepreneurs would also be part of the programme.

Chew this: Hyderabad low on veggies in its daily diet

May 6, 2019/The Times of India

HYDERABAD: Ever wondered how much vegetables, on an average, people living in the biryani-loving city consume? The average consumption of vegetables of a person living within Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits is about about 8.08 kilogram of vegetables, including onion, per month. This was revealed in the first-of-its-kind study undertaken by ICAR-National Academy of Agricultural Research Management and Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU). Going by the report, it can be assumed that each person in Hyderabad consumes about 269 grams of vegetables per day. This is 56 grams less when compared to the limit recommended by **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, which is 325 grams per day per person. As per the study, 7,22,186 metric tonnes (MT) of vegetables per annum are needed to meet the requirements of the population under GHMC. This adds up to about 60,182 MT per month and 2,006 MT per day. But the present supplies of vegetables to Hyderabad from neighbouring districts is about 6,89,363 MT per annum – a shortfall of about 32,823 MTSs per annum. To plug the supply gap, additional 41,840 acres need to be brought under vegetable cultivation. Former agriculture scientist Dr Loka Kishan Reddy says that farmers should get out of their traditional way of thinking. “There has to be crop planning at both the government and farmers’ levels,” he said. Farmers say that they lack knowledge about technologies and market fluctuations. “Telangana has the potential to produce more, provided there are market linkages. When export options are given, a farmer will produce more for local markets as well,” said Kranti R, a campaigner for natural farming and farmer.

[Study presents drug candidate for reversing mucosal barrier damage by HIV](#)



May 6, 2019/Eurek Alert

A vaginal microbicide that could prevent sexual transmission of HIV-1 in women has tremendous potential for saving lives and helping staunch an epidemic. But the delicate milieu of microbes that naturally colonize the vagina and maintain a healthy mucosal barrier have made the search for such a microbicide challenging, thwarting clinical trials of the most promising candidates. Investigators at Brigham and Women's Hospital led by Raina Fichorova, MD, PhD, in collaboration with an international team, tested a laboratory-made version of a naturally occurring protein (recombinant fragment of human Surfactant Protein D or rfhSP-D) on bioengineered vaginal tissues, immune cells and microbes to determine if the drug candidate could help prevent HIV transmission safely. In a paper published in *Frontiers in Immunology*, the team reports on the technique's success in preclinical testing, establishing it as a promising anti-HIV-1 vaginal microbicide. The research team reports, for the first time, a genetic signature that is tied to this breach. The activity of genes involved in inflammation and the tightness of the barrier were altered in the presence of the virus, helping promote infection. The team worked with collaborators from the ICMR National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health in Mumbai, India; the Genome Informatics Research Group at Bionivid Technology Pvt Ltd, in Bengaluru, India and Brunel University, London, Uxbridge, England. For this project, Fichorova's lab was chosen to host a predoctoral scholar by the UK HIV Research Trust, and a senior scientist supported by a program for Indo-US collaborative research. This study was partly supported by Medical Innovation Fund (Project no. 2011-16850) of **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, New Delhi, India.

[NIV scientists conduct pioneering study on spread and nature of Zika](#)

May 7, 2019/Pune Mirror

Zika virus (ZIKV) has evolved into a global health threat because of its unexpected causal link to microcephaly. A first-of-its kind study conducted by a scientist at National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, states that the mutation leading to cause microcephaly (birth defects) to Zika positive women was not found in Rajasthan. The study performed was to identify the circulating clade and presence of the proposed mutation that is linked to transmission and microcephaly. The sequences retrieved during the study did not have the proposed mutation that is linked to transmission and microcephaly as available in the literature though this data does not deny that mutation will not happen, say the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** officials. The study was conducted on strains of Zika virus (ZIKV) that led to an outbreak in Rajasthan (2018), Gujarat (2016) and Tamil Nadu (2017) respectively. Based on the study, scientists Pragya D Yadav, Bharati Malhotra, Gajanan Sakpal, Dimple A Nyayanti and seven others have published a paper 'Infection, Genetics and Evolution' in Elsevier journal. The experimental studies pertaining to the transmission of the ZIKV isolate from India and its role in causing microcephaly has not yet been looked into said Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) experts. Balram Bhargava, director general, ICMR, in an email stated, "ICMR-NIV, Pune is training new VRDLs also for diagnosis of Zika virus disease thus strengthening the laboratory network throughout the country. ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai and ICMR-NIV, Pune is conducting a follow-up study on the Zika positive pregnant women to see the outcome of the pregnancy

including the microcephaly or any other foetal abnormalities or pregnancy loss.” Dr Pradeep Awte, Maharashtra state surveillance officer, said, “Vector control measures that are adopted for dengue and chikungunya need to be strengthened including fogging activities as well as integrated mosquito control measures. The fever and entomological surveillance is going on in the state. In major cities like Pune, Nagpur, Mumbai the health officers are giving visits to keep surveillance in the airport areas.



‘SKIMS striving hard to fulfill play leader in healthcare’

May 7, 2019/Brighter Kashmir

Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Srinagar organized one day workshop on “Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)” in SKIMS Auditorium. The workshop/seminar was organized under the aegis of **ICMR**-PCOS National Task Force Study, for which SKIMS is the Coordinating Centre for the whole country. The event witnessed participation of students and teachers from a number of colleges and universities across the valley. Director SKIMS & Ex-Officio Secretary to Government, Prof Omar Javed Shah addressed the audience and said that SKIMS is striving hard to fulfill its role as leader in healthcare and such programmes will go long way in helping us towards accomplishing the goal. He appreciated Prof. Ashraf Ganie and his team for organizing educative workshop. Prof. Shariq Masoodi enlightened the audience with a fascinating and informative talk on the role of “Diet & Physical activity in PCOS”. The workshop proceeded with various presentations on Gynecological issues, Psychiatric co-morbidities, Role of USG in PCOS by Dr. Saima Wani, Dr. Arshid Hussain & Dr. Saika Amreen respectively. The workshop was attended by over 435 students from various institutions of state. The students started with documentary on SKIMS developments in the area of PCOS. The event commenced with welcome address by Dr. Aafia Rashid, Senior Research Officer, Clinical Research Laboratory, SKIMS and an introduction to ICMR-PCOS Task Force Study by Dr. Imtiyaz Ahmad Wani, Scientist-B, Clinical Research Laboratory, SKIMS. He gave a detailed presentation on the genesis of the task Force and the work plan and progress achieved so far. The event was followed by detailed presentation on the genesis of presentation on “PCOS in India- a thrust area of research by Prof M. Ashraf Ganie, Chief coordinator of this flagship project of ICMR. He gave a primer on the metabolic and endocrine aspects of PCOS. He said that the multiple epidemics of life style diseases are going on.

Asthma can be partly cured if managed effectively: Experts

May 7, 2019/The Times of India

Taking nebulizer for asthma without consulting a doctor can be harmful for your kids as it might lead to allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis (ABPA)— a fungus which can cause irreversible changes in the lungs. This is the recent findings of a study at the PGI and the report has been submitted to the department of health research, ICMR. Prof Meenu Singh, the main author and head of the pulmonary medicine unit at the PGI’s advanced paediatric centre, cautions: “The project has just completed and it has been submitted to the ICMR. We found that those who were positive with the ABPA were mostly coming from damp homes. The study found that 18% poorly controlled asthmatic patients had this fungus,” she said. Does this fungal infection worsen the condition of those suffering from asthma?

HOW TO USE METERED DOSE INHALER IN A BETTER MANNER

- 1** Inhale through the mouth when breathing in the medication
- 2** Keep your tongue under the mouthpiece so that it does not block its opening
- 3** Take a slow, deep breath and at the same time press down on the medication canister
- 4** Hold your breath for as long as comfortable (5 to 10 seconds) and then exhale
- 5** Use spacers to reduce deposition of medication in the mouth and throat and decrease adverse effects, such as thrush (a fungal infection of mouth and throat). Spacers must be cleaned every 1-3 weeks

DOS AND DON'TS

- ▶ Cover head and face of children when out in extreme conditions.; Drink lots of warm fluids
- ▶ Do not leave heated surroundings too quickly. First, adapt to the outside temperature by switching off the ACs
- ▶ Those who are allergic must increase dosage of medicine under the supervision of a doctor
- ▶ Avoid skipping breakfast. Healthy diet is necessary to enhance immunity
- ▶ Take zinc supplements. Green and leafy vegetables are a source of zinc
- ▶ In case of high fever that persists for over two days, consult a doctor
- ▶ Avoid going to school when infected with a viral Do not use towel or handkerchief of an infected person



FACTFILE

- 1** A PGIMER epidemiological study in 2011 ranked the city sixth in the country for prevalence of asthma. In fact, 2.28% of the city's population is asthmatic due to pollen, concluded the ICMR-supported study
- 2** In comparison, only 1.59% of population in Delhi had asthma at the time
- 3** According to an ongoing global asthma network study, the prevalence of asthma among children in Chandigarh has increased from 2-3% to 5-6% in the last one decade

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- 1** Shortness of breath; chest tightness or pain
- 2** Trouble sleeping caused by shortness of breath, coughing or wheezing
- 3** A whistling or wheezing sound when exhaling (wheezing is a common sign of asthma in children)
- 4** Coughing or wheezing attacks that are worsened by a respiratory virus, such as cold or flu

EMERGENCY SIGNS

- 1** Rapid worsening of shortness of breath or wheezing
- 2** No improvement even after using a quick-relief inhaler
- 3** Shortness of breath when you are doing minimal physical activity

PREVENTIVE STEPS

- 1** Identify and avoid asthma triggers. A number of outdoor allergens and irritants – ranging from pollen, cold air and air pollution – can trigger asthma attacks
- 2** Monitor your breathing. You may learn to recognize warning signs of an impending attack, such as slight coughing, wheezing or shortness of breath
- 3** Identify and treat attacks early. If you act quickly, you are less likely to have a severe attack. If symptoms don't improve, get medical consultation

“The ABPA is being seen in adults since last 4-5 years and now we found it in children too who were not getting relieve despite proper treatment. These patients have the risk of developing lung changes which ultimately leads to progressive lung damage. This is not seen in asthma per se,” said Prof Meenu.

Prof Meenu and her team are making Indian guidelines for the treatment of the ABPA for asthmatic patients. But what can this infection be attributed to?

The PGI daily sees 20 cases of asthma at its OPD and special clinic. But, with seasonal variations, pollination, wheat season and harvesting, there is a spike in this respiratory disease. “During October and November and the present months, there is four times increase in the symptoms. We recommend patients to change the dosage accordingly much before the change in the season,” said Prof Meenu.

The reasons for prevalence of asthma can be attributed to air pollution, smoking, incorrect treatment in children, seasonal variations causing viral infections such as common flu and ignorance among parents. “Asthma can be partly cured if managed effectively. It’s a myth that those who use inhalers get addicted,” said Prof SK Jindal, former head of the department of pulmonary medicine, PGI.

Missing wombs: the health scandal enslaving families in rural India

May 8, 2019/Reuters

KARAULI, India (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - Farm laborer Dharmendra Meena's first year of marriage with his wife Vaijanti in northwest India was "beautiful and carefree". But their first pregnancy changed everything.

First came the infection during childbirth, then the stark choice presented by a visiting doctor: undergo a "life-saving" hysterectomy - the removal of her uterus and ovaries - or die. The couple took a loan of 100,000 rupees (\$1,400) to cover the procedure, trapping Dharmendra in slave labor and joining thousands of people in rural India estimated to have been duped by unscrupulous doctors into having unnecessary hysterectomies. A Thomson Reuters Foundation investigation found many women - often young - targeted by doctors whom medical experts say seek to profit by prescribing the surgery for minor ailments, with the operation and later costs driving families into debt. Having a hysterectomy brought on the menopause for Vaijanti, also a farm laborer, then aged 19, while Dharmendra was forced to work on the money lender's farm for long hours and low pay as he tried to clear his debt - becoming a victim of debt bondage. He ended up having to do other jobs and take more loans to support his wife and child, and now - seven years after the surgery - earns less than the monthly interest of 6,000 rupees.

SEEKING A SOLUTION

About 3 percent of Indian women have had the surgery, found a landmark survey in 2018 by the government, which is trying to improve medical standards and reduce malpractice after media reports and a lawsuit drew attention to hysterectomy scams. The cost of hysterectomies driving families into slavery has largely gone under the radar, human rights activists said. The **Indian Council of Medical Research** is writing guidelines for hysterectomies, and the health ministry plans to publish a standard operating procedure for gynecologists to follow. But Dinesh Baswal, deputy commissioner of maternal health in the health ministry, said it was a complex problem as women sought hysterectomies thinking that it would help resolve abnormal bleeding or painful periods that stopped them working.

India Surgical Staplers Market Size, Status and Growth Opportunities by 2019-2023

May 8, 2019/Market Research Gazette

The Qualitative research study accompanied by ORBIS RESEARCH titled on "India Surgical Staplers Market describing the Product / Business Scope, Overview and outlook from 2019 to 2023". In this Research Report provides primary, secondary or History data for studies, the scope of the product and vendor briefings. The market Study is segmented by key regions which are accelerating the marketization and study is segmented by Products, Types, Status, Size, Current or Upcoming Trend, Smart Key Players, Future Opportunities, Application, Regional Demand, Challenges and Forecast to 2023. Cardiovascular diseases is one of the leading causes of mortality in India. The estimated age-standardized CVD death rate of 272 per 1,00,000 population in India is higher than the global average of 235 per 1,00,000 population. Also, obesity in India has almost reached an epidemic stage with morbid obesity affecting 5% of the country's population.

Consumption of processed food has become widespread in India due to its continued integration with global food markets. It is estimated that the incidence of cancer in India is to grow by 25% by 2020 (according to the cancer registry released by the **Indian Council of Medical Research**). These factors are readily driving the surgical stapling market since they often necessitate undergoing surgeries.



India is a growing market for surgical staplers. Indian companies like Meril Life Sciences have come up with a range of surgical staplers for various types of surgeries. Manual skin staplers are widely used to close wounds post-surgery, and more people are opting for stapling for the management of haemorrhoids.

- o The India surgical staplers market is segmented by product into manual and powered surgical staplers and by type into reusable and disposable surgical staplers. The reusable surgical stapler segment is expected to grow at a higher CAGR during the forecast period (2018-2023).
- o The India surgical staplers market is further segmented based on its applications- abdominal surgery, cardiac surgery, orthopaedic surgery, general surgery and other surgeries.

Virginity Test: Why the two finger test is unscientific, illogical and illegal

May 9, 2019/The Times of India

The two-finger test also known as the PV (Per Vaginal) refers to an intrusive physical examination of a woman's vagina to figure out the laxity of vaginal muscles and whether the hymen is distensible or not. In this, the doctor puts two fingers inside the woman's vagina and the ease with which the fingers penetrate her are assumed to be in direct proportion to her sexual experience. Thus, if the fingers slide in easily the woman is presumed to be sexually active and if the fingers fail to penetrate or find difficulty in penetrating, then it is presumed that she has her hymen intact, which is a proof of her being a virgin.

Virgin is a person who has had no previous sexual experience. Worldwide a great premium is attached to a woman's virginity being a sign of her character and marriageability, so much so that women resort to whitening, tightening, reconstruction and other surgical interventions to have that perfect vagina. There are also artificial hymens; prosthetics used to fake virginity, that are easily available online. Science has debunked the myth of an intact hymen being proof of a woman's virginity. Moreover, sex doesn't necessarily have to be vaginal. A woman can engage in oral or anal sex and still be considered a virgin in the traditional sense. In March 2014, the Union health ministry drew new guidelines for treating rape victims, and has asked all hospitals to set up a designated room for forensic and medical examination of victims besides outlawing the two-finger test performed on them, dubbing it as unscientific. The Department of Health Research (DHR) along with **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** with the help of experts formulated a set of national guidelines for dealing with criminal assault cases, which will hopefully put an end to the horrendous medical process, which the victims are subjected to after the sexual abuse. The DHR had also drafted a new manual to address the psycho-social impact of sexual violence including counseling that the victims should receive to alleviate her woes. The guidelines require doctors to record the history of alleged assault, examine the victim physically and even treat and counsel the victim psychologically. But, majority of the cases show an approach contrary to the prescribed guidelines and medical examinations are conducted in a recklessness manner with scant regard to the victim's comfort. The casual and cavalier approach is quite apparent by the way

the MLC's are prepared in almost every case of such alleged sexual assault. Rape being a stigmatized crime, the survivors often face humiliating, degrading and discriminating treatment within their own homes, police stations and then in the hospitals where they undergo invasive medical tests. The women being the most vulnerable in such a situation, a doctor at this point in time can act as a huge support.



Birthing slavery: Unnecessary hysterectomy is pushing families into debt bondage

May 10, 2019/Financial Express

A Thomson Reuters investigation shows that a particularly shocking form of medical malpractice—unnecessary hysterectomies conducted on poor and barely literate young women from rural areas in many states to bilk state-provided health insurance cover—is leading to further impoverishment of victims' families and pushing them into debt. In many cases, unable to pay the debt, family members end up in debt bondage—where they work on the money-lender's farm without pay to clear off the debt. A 2018 government survey found that nearly 3% of Indian women have had hysterectomies. As per the government data, 50% of the women had never been to school and two-thirds had their surgery done at private hospitals where the likelihood of the scam being perpetrated was higher. The **Indian Council of Medical Research** is writing guidelines for the procedure and the health ministry plans to bring a pre-op standard operating procedure for gynaecologists. While medical malpractice is one angle—Thomson Reuters reports how despite the procedure losing cover under state-funded insurance schemes, unnecessary hysterectomies continue to be advised—the other is of women voluntarily choosing the procedure. A small number of those who received unnecessary hysterectomy sought the procedure thinking it would help in resolving abnormal bleeding or painful periods that were interfering with them working. Visting hysterectomy-receivers in villages in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Telangana, Thomson Reuters found that the families of many had been pushed into debt and bonded labour by the procedure. States like Telangana—which records the highest number of hysterectomies—and Chhattisgarh have cracked down on the hysterectomy scam, but the scam doggedly continues to thrive in the country.

With regards,

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