



## **INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH**

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

**Media report (1 to 7 June 2019)**  
**(ICMR IN NEWS)**

**(Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi)**  
Information Interface Officer

## **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 1 to 7 June 2019) includes the mention Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 21 news papers including top news papers such as Hindustan Times, The Hindu, The Economic Times, The Tribune 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.*

*Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi  
Information Interface Officer/PRO  
ICMR Hqrs, New Delhi*

**ICMR white paper backs ban on e-cigarettes**

June 1, 2019/Pune Mirror

**Experts call for full e-cigarette ban**

June 1, 2019/The Telegraph

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**State to have 3 virology institutes soon**

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**Nipah: Six test negative, 33 put in high-risk category**

June 7, 2019/The Indian Express

**ICMR moves to get Nipah antidote made in India with Australian help**

June 7, 2019/The New Indian Express

### **ICMR white paper backs ban on e-cigarettes**

June 1, 2019/Pune Mirror

A month after Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Maharashtra, banned manufacture and sale of e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has come out with a white paper on Friday, to underscore the dangers of using such products. It has reaffirmed what has been much debated that these contraptions used as safer options to cigarettes are not so safe after all. It has pointed out that given their nicotine content, they impact the human body adversely, impairing the cardiovascular system, respiratory immune cell function and airways, not unlike the more dreaded cigarettes. They also pose risk to foetuses and child brain development. Besides the addictive substance — nicotine — the battery-powered devices contain other ingredients such as flavouring agents and vapourisers, all of which are harmful to health. Nicotine, which is rapidly introduced into the body, hooks the user for life and over time adds up into a potential risk to the addicted. As with cigarettes, ENDS is equally harmful to non-users, who are exposed to the vapours second hand. Passive exposure suffered by pregnant women, put both mother and foetus at risk. Currently there are over 460 different e-cigarette brands with varied configuration of nicotine deliver available in the market. Prof K Srinath Reddy, president, Public Health Foundation of India and a renowned cardiologist and public health expert who chaired the ICMR expert group for this white paper argued that the tobacco consumption, especially cigarette smoking, has shown a decline in India in recent years, in response to several tobacco control measures that has already been initiated.

### **Experts call for full e-cigarette ban**

June 1, 2019/The Telegraph

India's apex medical regulatory agency has sought a "complete ban" on electronic nicotine delivery systems, including electronic cigarettes, warning they could nudge non-smokers towards nicotine addiction and have "a net negative impact on public health". The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, in a white paper released on Friday, said e-cigarettes are highly addictive and can harm the respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological systems the way cigarette smoking does. E-cigarettes are battery-powered electronic devices that are used to smoke or "vape" a flavoured solution containing varying concentrations of nicotine. The white paper comes at a time tobacco lobbies have been claiming that electronic cigarettes are less harmful than cigarettes and should therefore be acceptable as a viable alternative to reduce tobacco smoking. Many public health experts believe the claim is a misleading one. The ICMR's paper says the degree to which electronic cigarettes can help people kick the habit or reduce the harm has not been firmly established. Instead, available research suggests that electronic cigarettes can drive non-smokers to nicotine addiction and initiate dual use in smokers, it adds. "They're traps that could perpetuate nicotine dependence — they push non-smokers towards nicotine addiction and smokers into dual use," said K.

Srinath Reddy, a senior cardiologist and president of the Public Health Foundation of India who chaired the 12-member expert panel that produced the white paper. The health ministry had last year sent an advisory to all the states seeking a ban on the manufacture, trade and sale of e-cigarettes in line with actions by health authorities in Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Mizoram and Punjab in 2016 and 2017.



### [ICMR seeks complete ban on e-cigarettes](#)

June 1, 2019/ET Healthworld

NEW DELHI: The government's research wing **Indian Council of Medical Research** has recommended "complete prohibition" on e-cigarettes and other Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) to protect public health. In a white paper, presented on Friday, the Council said the suggestion is made based on scientific data that shows ENDS contain nicotine which is highly addictive and harmful for health. Use of ENDS also has documented adverse effects including DNA damage, carcinogenesis, cardiovascular and neurological disorders and respiratory problems among others, it said. ENDS are devices that heat a solution to create an aerosol, which also frequently contains flavours, usually dissolved into propylene glycol and glycerin. There are various types of ENDS devices like e-cigarettes, heat-not-burn devices, vape, e-sheesha, e-nicotine flavoured hookah among others. The common type is an e-cigarette that produces an aerosolised mixture of the flavoured liquids and nicotine, which is inhaled by the user. ENDS can also cause molecular and immunological toxicity and poses risk to foetal development and pregnancy, according to ICMR's white paper. The release of the white paper assumes significance amid raging debate over the harm reduction aspects of ENDS with some organisations claiming that they help in smoking cessation and are less harmful alternatives to traditional cigarettes. However, not buying into such arguments, ICMR said, "The degree to which, if at all, the ENDS or e-cigarettes benefit as tobacco cessation aides is not firmly established, evidence suggests that there is a risk of dual use to some extent and initiation to tobacco addiction to non-smokers. Hence, on the balance these products have a net negative impact on public health." The council added, use of ENDS can open a gateway for new tobacco addiction which is a potential threat to the country's tobacco control laws and ongoing tobacco control programmes.

### [ENDS White Paper: Why ICMR is calling for a ban on ENDS or e- cigarettes](#)

June 2, 2019/Speciality Medical Dialogues

The apex medical regulatory body of the country, **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, called for a complete ban on Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) or e-cigarettes in a white paper released on May 31st, 2019 on the eve of World No Tobacco Day. The decision was taken based on the scientific evidence which is in stark contrast with the growing claims made by the e-cigarette manufacturers that it facilitate the cessation of smoking. The white paper pointed out that smoke or 'vape' which is produced by the e-cigarette contains a varying concentration of nicotine which is considered as one of the most addictive substances and the rapidity at which it is introduced into the body, age of first exposure and the dosage administered all add to determine the potential risk of a person being addicted to it throughout life. These devices also contain other ingredients as flavoring agents and vaporizers, which are also found to be harmful

to health. The white paper adds the use of e-cigarettes not only poses a potential risk for the user causing adverse effects which include DNA damage; carcinogenesis; cellular, molecular and immunological toxicity; respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological disorders to its users but passive smoking can adversely affect on foetal development and pregnancy. Also, it stated that there are reports of poisoning due to accidental swallowing by children. These devices also can cause fire and explosion.

### [Meet a cardiologist with a heart of gold](#)

June 2, 2019/The New Indian Express

NEW DELHI: He wanted to become a cardiologist at the age of 14. Several years later, Dr. Balram Bhargava, Director General, **Indian Council of Medical Research** (ICMR), is not only a much revered man in the field of medicine but his years of experience and medical research have earned him plenty of accolades. The latest feather in his cap was the 2019 Dr Lee Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health at the 72nd World Health Assembly. Bhargava, also a professor of cardiology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), has also been behind several targeted health initiatives for the city. Bhargava was felicitated with the prestigious award for his achievements as a cardiologist, innovator and researcher. He is widely regarded as a leader in the field of biomedical innovations public health and medical research. His work for vulnerable sections sets him apart in the field and has made him one of the most respected cardiologists going around. “My father’s death spurred me on to become a cardiologist. I thank the Almighty for making me capable enough to give back to the society,” he said. Opening up on his Delhi-centric initiatives, Bhargava said, “We have put together a few programmes focusing on public health. One of these is mission DELHI (Delhi Emergency Life Heart-attack Initiative) for early diagnosis and treatment of people who have suffered heart attacks by trained paramedics. This initiative is aimed at promoting motorcycle ambulance services.”

### [Crackdown on e-cigarettes and similar devices](#)

June 3, 2019/Health Issue India

Coinciding with last week’s observance of World No Tobacco Day, it was announced that e-cigarettes, or electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), would be prohibited in the northern state. The rules prohibit the devices from being stored, manufactured, or advertised. In the days since, three health department agencies – including the department’s drug control, food safety, and tobacco control arms – jointly conducted a series of raids. In the process, Rs 15 lakh worth of unlicensed tobacco products were seized. This included Rs 10 lakh worth of illicit e-cigarettes. The remaining Rs 5 lakh worth of products included tobacco-molasses and imported cigarettes lacking the legally required health labelling and warnings. City police are questioning one individual implicated in the sale of illegal tobacco products. The actions undertaken in Rajasthan continues a trend of heightened scrutiny against e-cigarettes in India. Raids of the kind seen in Rajasthan are relatively common occurrences. In Hyderabad last year, for example, Rs 7 lakh worth of e-cigarette products were seized. In recent weeks, it was discovered that 36 e-cigarette brands are operating outside of the law in India. Beyond the illegal sales of e-cigarettes, efforts have been underway since last year to ban their legal sale entirely. The Union Health Ministry in August directed state governments to ban e-cigarettes. The Ministry asserted that the devices pose a

“great health risk to the public at large, especially to children, adolescents, pregnant women, and women of reproductive age.” On World No Tobacco Day, the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** also called for a ban to be imposed on ENDS. Director-General Professor Balram Bhargava stated



*“Use of ENDS or e-cigarettes has documented adverse effects on humans, which include DNA damage; carcinogenic, cellular, molecular and immunological toxicity; respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological disorders; and adverse impact on fetal development and pregnancy”*

### **Nipah: Centre deploys 6-member team to Kerala**

June 4, 2019/The Hindu Business Line

After a 23-year-old student was confirmed to have been infected with the Nipah virus in Kerala, State and Central governments have swung into action to control the re-emergence of the deadly disease. The official confirmation came on Tuesday morning from the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune. Besides the confirmed case, four suspected cases were declared on Tuesday by the State Health Minister, KK Shylaja. Two of these are nurses: one, a relative of the patient and the other, a friend or acquaintance. The Minister also said that the confirmed patient is stable so far. Nipah can be transmitted from animals to humans. It can also spread through contaminated food and directly from one human to another.

The patient had navigated through three districts – Thrissur, Idukki and Ernakulum – before being diagnosed accurately. The official further said: “He, along with a group of friends, was pursuing an internship at a polytechnic institute. He developed symptoms there and then travelled from one health facility to another, without being treated appropriately. He went home in the interim before landing up at a private facility in Ernakulum.” Nipah symptoms include sore throat, muscle pain, fever, vomiting, and breathing difficulties, and patients may enter coma in 24-48 hours, according to the World Health Organisation. While the virus has no vaccine or drug which works infallibly to cure, Balram Bhargava, Director of **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, said that monoclonal antibodies have shown to be effective in some cases. “Following last year’s cases of Nipah in Kerala, the ICMR had procured 50 batches of monoclonal antibodies (derived from cell lines of immune cells), which are stored at the NIV. These are being shipped to Ernakulam and will reach the district by tomorrow,” Bhargava told BusinessLine. A central team with six officers has been deployed and it has reached out for epidemiological investigation protocol, contact tracing for the early detection of suspects, testing protocols for suspects, and review of isolation facilities. “We are finding out where the person was infected, who he was in contact with before landing in a health facility, and whether any of those contacts experienced the symptoms, or if this is an isolated incidence. Also, our control room is active,” said Sujeet K Singh, Director, National Centre For Disease Control (NCDC). A team from the NIV is also being dispatched for conducting tests on bats for the potential virus. The Health Ministry has spoken to the Director General of Forests to extend all co-operation in this regard.

## ICMR-NIE to strengthen the research capacity in India

June 4, 2019/Bio Spectrum India



ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE), a premier institute of **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has announced the launch of Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) 'NIE-ICMR eCertificate' courses- called as NIECer courses with the aim to strengthen the research capacity in India.

The first in the NIECer series, Health Research Fundamentals (NIECer 101) -is a basic level course in health research methods. The course is designed and conducted by faculty members from ICMR School of Public Health at ICMR-NIE. It will explain the fundamental concepts in epidemiology and bio-statistics related to research methods. This course will provide an overview of steps and principles for designing bio-medical and health research studies among human participants.

The Health Research Fundamentals (NIECer 101) was launched in 2016. Approximately 21,000 candidates from across the Country have participated in the course until now. The next session of the course is scheduled during 29 July - 20 September 2019. Interested Participants can now register until 29 th July 2019.

The course will be useful to any current or potential health researchers including students, clinical/ public health/ laboratory researchers, physicians, research associates, allied health professionals, scientists, statisticians, ethics committee members and project managers. The course is open to undergraduate students in Medical/Dental/AYUSH disciplines or graduates in any other discipline as well.

## Experts differ on ICMR suggestion on banning e-cigarettes, ENDS devices

June 4, 2019/Business Standard

A section of experts have said banning Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), including e-cigarettes, without proper research will reduce the options of viable alternatives for smokers who want to quit tobacco.

The reaction comes in the wake of apex research body - Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) recommending a "complete" ban on ENDS, saying their use can initiate nicotine addiction among non-smokers. ENDS are devices that heat a solution to create an aerosol, which also frequently contains flavours, usually dissolved into propylene glycol and glycerin. There are various types of ENDS devices like e-cigarettes, heat-not-burn devices, vape, e-sheesha, e nicotine flavoured hookah among others.

Riccardo Polosa, Director, Institute for Internal Medicine and Clinical Immunology of the University of Catania said the ICMR recommendation only further intensifies the debate on the merits and de-merits of ENDS. "The conclusions drawn by ICMR as well as the Ministry of Health do not take into account that it is incumbent upon a welfare-oriented government to work together with the scientific community to better protect the millions of Indian smokers by adopting a harm reduction strategy rather than banning possible options," he said.

Lion Shahab, Associate Professor, University College London (UCL) said combustion releases more harmful chemicals, but e-cigarettes do not have combustion so it is safe to assume that they are much safer than normal cigarettes. In a white paper released on World No Tobacco Day, the ICMR had said e-cigarettes adversely affect the cardiovascular system, impair respiratory immune cell function and airways in a way similar to cigarette smoking and are responsible for severe respiratory disease.

## [ENDS can play a critical role in 'Harm Reduction': experts](#)

June 4, 2019/United News of India



New Delhi, Jun 4 (UNI) To step up the fight against tobacco, experts have underlined the need for Harm reduction strategies to reduce the potential risks associated with health behaviours. **ICMR** released a white paper underscoring the dangers of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) on 'World No-Tobacco Day'. Experts have called for a holistic approach on the subject. Dr Anoop Misra, Consultant – Diabetologist, Fortis C-DOC Centre of Excellence for Diabetes, Metabolic Diseases & Endocrinology said, "It is extremely important to develop public health strategies that rely on innovation to reduce harm. Harm reduction as a public health strategy aims to reduce the potential risks associated with health behaviors. It neither condones nor condemns any addiction but evaluates the consequences of such addiction and tries to reduce the harms that it poses for individuals, families and communities. Countries like UK, Canada, Unites States are promoting substitution for combustible tobacco with less harmful non-combustible sources of nicotine like ENDS. These should be available as harm reduction strategy for chronic cigarette smokers, but similar to tobacco, should be restricted to underage population. India should consider robust tobacco control policies and should also learn from the experiences of other countries and formulate effective regulatory guidelines.' Dr Sameer Kaul, Founder President of The Cancer Foundation, 'On the contrary clear indications of declining smoking rates in USA and Europe undeniably place ENDS as the most novel anti-tobacco smoking strategy till date.'

## [Nicotine carcinogenic, say no to e-cigars, too!](#)

June 4, 2019/The Hans India

The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has recommended a complete ban on e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), based on currently available scientific evidence. ICMR noted that e-cigarettes and other such devices contained not only nicotine solution, which was highly addictive, but also harmful ingredients such as flavoring agents and vaporisers. Dr Ravi Mehrotra, Director of National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research and a member of the panel, was quoted in a report as saying that in the wake of low barrier to entry, the market for e-cigarettes and other such devices is growing rapidly, with the industry bringing in a diverse set of products through a variety of channels. "Use of ENDS or e-cigarettes can open a gateway for new tobacco addiction. On the balance, these have a negative impact on public health. "It is proven beyond doubt that cigarette smoking is harmful, but there are no long-term studies on e-cigarettes to state it is completely harmful or definitely safe, But, e-cigarette are strictly not recommended because both routine cigarette and e-cigarette contain nicotine. In many cases, youngsters being occasional smokers with an intention to quit smoking would choose e-cigarette but that would also become an addiction as it contains nicotine and is available in many flavors. Hence, to get rid of smoking, behavioral therapies and nicotine replacement therapies are much beneficial." said Dr Nalini, Senior Consultant Pulmonary and Sleep Disorders, Continental Hospitals. "E-cigarettes must be banned as the latest studies proved that it contains nicotine which makes one to get addicted and fall prey to it more and more; previously e-cigarettes used to be prescribed for the patients to get rid of smoking which is proved as a blunder mistake now.

## [Finding source of deadly Nipah viral infection focus of government team](#)



June 4, 2019/Hindustan Times

As a 23-year-old man in Kerala's Ernakulam tested positive for Nipah viral infection, the government's focus now is to determine the source of the infection, a Union health ministry official said. "The expert team working on the ground is trying to establish how the man got infected; whether it was a human-to-human transmission or bats-to-human transmission," said the official requesting anonymity. The Union health ministry has also sent a team of experts from Pune's National Institute of Virology (NIV) for conducting tests in and around Ernakulam district on bats that are known to be the carriers of the virus. The experts in the government are not calling the disease endemic yet even though Nipah virus infection has been reported from Kerala for a second year. "The disease is certainly not endemic as of now. It is not even an outbreak as only one case has been confirmed so far from the country. If it is a new disease, then even a single confirmed case is an outbreak, but Nipah has been around for a while and so cannot be called an outbreak," said the official. "By definition for a disease to be called endemic, a minimum number of cases has to be reported across all seasons such as in case of dengue, malaria etc that are reported even in non seasons. This is not the case with Nipah yet." Union health minister Harshvardhan held meetings with experts from the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and ministry officials. "I had a meeting with all officers in the morning, including the health secretary and director general, ICMR. Yesterday a team of six senior officers, including epidemiologists and scientists, reached Kerala. I am in touch with Kerala's health minister and have offered every possible help," he said. The Centre has set up a control room New Delhi to monitor the situation.

## [Kerala confirms deadly Nipah outbreak](#)

June 5, 2019/The Tribune

Central experts reached Kerala to oversee response to the Nipah virus outbreak in the state where a student, 21, tested positive for the infection in Ernakulam today. This is the second Nipah outbreak in Kerala and the fourth in the country. The 2018 Nipah outbreak in Kerala led to 17 deaths and was traced to fruit bats in Kozhikode's Perambara where the index case was detected. The man was having water from a well infested with fruit bats. After last year's lessons, health systems responded immediately today with Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan speaking to his Kerala counterpart KK Shailaja and offering all help. After the emergency meeting here, the Health Ministry activated the National Centre for Disease Control, the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and the National Institute of Virology (NIV) to meet the Nipah challenge. ICMR's NIV is the only lab in the country equipped to catch large fruit bats and test these. NIV teams left for Kerala today to study the source of infection. ICMR also despatched to Government Medical College Kozhikode a consignment of what scientists call "a wonder anti-Nipah drug" which India had procured from Queensland (Australia) last year under emergency imports. ICMR's Ganga Khedkar said, "There is no licensed vaccine or drug for NiV across the world but after extensive review of literature last year, we found that Monoclonal 102.4 antibodies against Nipah virus developed by Dr Christopher C Broder of Australia had shown promising results.

## [Fighting Air Pollution Is Everybody's Responsibility: UN India Agency Heads](#)

June 5, 2019/The Wire

There is a silent killer in our midst, and we must act together to stop it. Air pollution, both indoor and outdoor, as reports from various agencies have highlighted, is the single largest environmental risk to human health. Estimates suggest that as many as 7 million people die prematurely every year from factors attributable to air pollution. Nine out of 10 people in the world today continue to breathe dirty air that damages their lungs. The India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative led by the **Indian Council of Medical Research** recognised air pollution as the second highest risk factor affecting disease and mortality. Air pollution kills more people every year than tobacco smoking. What this means is that on a poor day, breathing is like smoking continuously – except that we don't get to choose not to smoke. And children are even more vulnerable than adults. We know that toxic gases and nanoscopic particles that slip through our bodies' defences come from a variety of sources: the burning of fossil fuels such as coal for energy and transport; the use of dirty fuels; construction; home cooking, heating and lighting; the chemicals and mining industries; and the burning of waste, forests and crop residues. This means it's not just our health that's at stake – it's the earth's too. The reasons we breathe toxic air are also the reasons behind environmental damage, global warming, and reduced crop growth and agricultural productivity, which in turn reduce food security.

## [Growing resistance to antibiotics in Indians](#)

June 5, 2019/Wio News

According to a study published by **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, Most healthy Indians are resistant to common antibiotics. Watch this video to know more by click on this link.

## [.Most healthy Indians resistant to common antibiotics: Study](#)

June 5, 2019/The Economic Times

A study published by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has found antibiotic resistant organisms in the digestive tracts of two out of every three healthy persons that it tested, pointing to a rapid spread of antibiotic resistance in the Indian population. The study was based on analysis of stool samples of 207 individuals who had not taken any antibiotic for at least a month and did not suffer from any chronic illness. Isolates taken from 139 of the 207 individuals were found to be resistant to one or more antibiotic class. The maximum resistance was seen for cephalosporins (60%) and fluoroquinolones (41.5%) – two commonly used antibiotics. Dr Pallab Ray, professor of medicine microbiology at PGI Chandigarh who led the study, told TOI that the findings should be treated as a warning. “Our study shows how inappropriate use of antibiotics has transformed the healthy human intestinal gut flora (microorganisms living in the digestive tract) into a reservoir of antibiotic-resistant organisms. At present, these organisms are resistant to low-end antibiotics but if the misuse persists, these may become resistant to high-end antibiotics as well,” Dr Ray said.

## Experts differ on ICMR suggestion on banning e-cigarettes, ENDS devices



June 5, 2019/Medical Dialogues

A section of experts have said banning Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), including e-cigarettes, without proper research will reduce the options of viable alternatives for smokers who want to quit tobacco. The reaction comes in the wake of apex research body – **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** recommending a “complete” ban on ENDS, saying their use can initiate nicotine addiction among non-smokers. ENDS are devices that heat a solution to create an aerosol, which also frequently contains flavours, usually dissolved into propylene glycol and glycerin. There are various types of ENDS devices like e-cigarettes, heat-not-burn devices, vape, e-sheesha, e-nicotine flavoured hookah among others. Riccardo Polosa, Director, Institute for Internal Medicine and Clinical Immunology of the University of Catania said the ICMR recommendation only further intensifies the debate on the merits and de-merits of ENDS. “The conclusions drawn by ICMR as well as the Ministry of Health do not take into account that it is incumbent upon a welfare-oriented government to work together with the scientific community to better protect the millions of Indian smokers by adopting a harm reduction strategy rather than banning possible options,” he said. India is the second largest consumer of tobacco with over one in 10 of the world’s smokers and incurs a staggering economic burden of approximately USD 26 billion per annum. Sameer Kaul, a nationally acknowledged voice on cancer prevention and treatment and Founder President of The Cancer Foundation, said evidence-based practices seem to have been given a go away. As far as scientific data is concerned, not a single shred of evidence exists anywhere in the world pointing towards carcinogenic potential of any of this device’s ingredients or components, he claimed. “On the contrary, clear indications of declining smoking rates in the US and Europe undeniably place ENDS as the most novel anti-tobacco smoking strategy till date,” Kaul said.

## Deal on Nipah compassionate response

June 7, 2019/The Telegraph

India’s top health research agency has requested the world’s largest vaccine maker in Pune to produce and stockpile an experimental therapeutic molecule to be offered on compassionate grounds to patients during Nipah virus outbreaks anywhere in India or neighbouring countries. The Serum Institute of India has, responding to the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, agreed to produce the experimental molecule, a monoclonal antibody called m102.4, originally developed by the US and Australian researchers, senior ICMR and Serum officials said. The ICMR also hopes to use the m102.4 to be made by Serum for a global clinical trial to assess its efficacy in patients during rare but deadly Nipah outbreaks. The trial protocol is under development in consultation with the World Health Organisation, Geneva, and the US National Institutes of Health. The m102.4 molecule, developed by Australian and US scientists, has been tested in animals and given to people only in emergency situations. Between 2010 and 2017, 14 persons (13 in Australia and one in the US) received m102.4 for exposure to either Nipah or hendra virus, closely related to Nipah. “None of the people who received the m102.4 since 2010 have had any serious adverse effects,” Christopher Broder said in a presentation made at a Nipah Treatment Protocol meeting in New Delhi. A main challenge for a clinical trial would be the nature of Nipah outbreaks.

“They are unpredictable, localised and short-lived,” said Gangakhedkar. “So we need to design a clinical trial that will pool patients from multiple outbreaks in different countries.” Serum’s executive director Suresh Jhadhav said the company that already has experience in producing monoclonal antibodies against rabies would establish the capacity to produce about 1,000 doses of m102.4. The ICMR will transport the doses wherever outbreaks occur. The ICMR worked with regulatory authorities in Australia, the US and India to fast-track the procurement and facilitate the regulatory approvals to use for patients m102.4 if necessary.

### **State to have 3 virology institutes soon**

June 7, 2019/The Hindu

In place of an almost non-functional virology institute in Alappuzha, the State will soon have three virology institutes, Health Minister K.K. Shylaja has said. The State had approached the Union government last year during the Nipah outbreak for assistance to set up a virology institute in Kozhikode. Administrative sanction for the project was obtained last month. An amount of ₹3 crore has been sanctioned for the institute to come up under **Indian Council of Medical Research**, she said. The Health Minister said that the existing virology institute in Alappuzha was getting upgraded with support from the National Virology Institute. The State had sought support for this too. The kind of biological safety level required to set up such institutes required support from the Union government. “We cannot have virology institutes in every district,” she added. Besides, the State had also started an advanced virology institute in Thiruvananthapuram under the Science and Technology Department. The infrastructure of the institute, being built with an advisory panel of scientists, was almost complete. She said her visit to Delhi on Friday would include talks with the Union Health Minister with regard to more funds for setting up a good virology institute.

### **Nipah: Six test negative, 33 put in high-risk category**

June 7, 2019/The Indian Express

Six persons, who were kept in isolation after they developed symptoms similar to those of a Nipah infection, tested negative for the virus on Thursday. However, 33 people who came in contact with the youth from Kerala’s Ernakulam, who tested positive for the virus, have been identified as vulnerable. The confirmation that the six persons under observation are not infected came from National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, where their samples had been sent for examination. Lab results of two other persons who are in the isolation ward at Government Medical College, Kochi, are awaited. Officials of the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** said there was no immediate requirement to test samples of persons who did not develop any symptom. “Six persons who had come in contact with the 23-year-old had fever. Hence their samples were taken for tests,” an ICMR official said. Kerala Health Secretary Dr Rajan Khobragade said that of the 316 persons identified in the contact list of the infected youth, data have been collected on 255. “We...found that 33 of them are in high-risk category. 191 others have been put in the low-risk category. Data collection of the others would be completed soon,” he said.

NEW DELHI: India could soon have indigenously produced antidote to Nipah virus, a deadly disease that has hit Kerala second time in a row this year. The drug, however, is likely to be available for treatment only from next year in case of further outbreaks. Country's top health research agency, **Indian Medical Research Council**, has asked an Indian vaccine and pharmaceutical manufacturer, Serum Institute of India, to manufacture the experimental monoclonal antibody for compassionate use during any future outbreaks of Nipah in India or other neighbouring countries. The council had obtained the MAB from Australia last year during Kerala's 2018 Nipah outbreak, but it could not be used as the vials arrived only in the first week of June — a few days after the last case of the disease was reported. The same batch of the drugs is now being used on some patients during the ongoing Nipah outbreak in the state. Officials in the ICMR said it had approached SII asking whether it would agree to make limited doses of the MAb only for free supply in the event of Nipah outbreaks. Suresh Jadhav, business head and technical director at SII, said the company has agreed to start making the antidote following technology transfer under CSR but expects to make small amounts — less than 1,000 doses per year — as Nipah outbreaks are rare.

R R Gangakhedkar, country head of epidemic and communicable diseases, ICMR said the agency was trying to get the drug made in India as the disease, so far, has been specific to Indian subcontinent. "This is a problem of our region and that's why we have to try and find solutions," he said. "However, as the efficacy of the drug has been tested only in US and Australia so far we will offer the drug to a patient only if they want it and it won't be treated as clinical trial."

With regards,

Syed Adil Shamim Andrabi  
Information Interface Officer/PRO  
Indian Council of Medical Research-  
Department of Health Research  
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
proicmr@gmail.com, syed.adil@icmr.gov.in  
Ext. 286, Phone. 26589130