



Data access and enhancing research collaborations of urgent importance.

Our scientist colleagues have raised important concerns about access to data for research. Wide and correct access to data and information and wide collaboration is important at any time and most urgent now.

Issues such as vaccine hesitancy, nature of variants, re-infection, extent, and nature of post-vaccination protection, etc. can all be addressed better by collaborative research. While this is being done by some groups now, our broader research community needs to be much more facilitated by our research agencies to be involved in addition to 'bottom-up' efforts. This collaborative must include and reach beyond groups at our research- agencies and their institutions, and the health ministry's agencies and their laboratories. The broader clinical research community needs to be brought in. ICMR, DBT, NCDC are addressing this on an urgent basis.

Our research agencies, laboratories, and collaboratives (ICMR, DBT, CSIR, NCDC, INSACOG, MeTy, etc.) will immediately highlight mechanisms of research access to already available datasets and put in place access to new datasets as they are formed. In addition, they will facilitate access to disparate government data sets in our ecosystem. All use of such data will post their finding in an immediately accessible manner in the public domain. The mechanisms for ethical clearances and data sharing are shared here: (<https://static.psa.gov.in/psa-prod/publication/OM%20for%20focused%20Research%20on%20Corona%20Vaccines%20and%20other%20S%26T%20Issues.pdf>)

The INSACOG collaborative is taking every step to expand sequencing, link data to contexts, and put this out in the public domain. But for sequencing to, a wider group must be involved. INSACOG will reach out to bring in more partners from the ecosystem, including those that are independently supported. Important issues in sequencing are data annotation at collection and analysis after sequencing. Wider involvement of teams in data analysis, bioinformatics, and decision-making will immediately be put in place by INSACOG.

Delegation for clearances for imports have already been given, some months ago, to Secretaries of Departments/Ministries and decisions can be taken at the level of Deans and Institution directors. This will be examined, and specific steps taken to remove bottlenecks.

In addition, facilitation needs to be in place to collaborate with state governments, municipal corporations, and hospitals for research. While rules and guidelines allow this, very often local organisations may not be aware of them or process details. Proactive measures will be taken by our research agencies to facilitate these research efforts, even when they are not themselves, directly involved; conveying to partners what mechanisms are available and what guidelines are to be followed.

These steps will help to ensure all capabilities are being fully used at a time of vital national need where research information needs to impact in near-real-time on decision making.

Specific questions, concerns, and suggestions about data access can be sent directly to the relevant research agencies/departments.



Their contact information is given below:

- a. Request for accessing ICMR Testing Data - to be sent to ICMR DATA ACCESS COMMITTEE, which is mandated to screen the request and channelise the request to EG-9.

More information on ICMR-Testing data access has been made public through PPT uploaded on the ICMR web page.

Contact Person:

Dr Harpreet Singh

Scientist E & Head Bioinformatics, Data Management, Genomics

ICMR Headquarters, New Delhi

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- b. NCDC:

Dr. Himanshu Chauhan, Joint Director, IDSP

Disease-related Data: Data on disease Outbreaks <https://www.idsp.nic.in/>

For COVID-19 pandemic <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>

<https://www.nhp.gov.in/disease/communicable-disease/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Contact Person:

Dr. Sujeet K Singh, NPO, IDSP

Email: klsp.npo@nic.in

(Dr. Himanshu Chauhan, Joint Director, IDSP, will connect to state nodal officers as needed). The list of State Surveillance officers is available on the IDSP website:

<https://www.idsp.nic.in/>

- c. INSACOG – CSIR – IGIB

Contact person:

Dr. Vinod Scaria

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Site being created.

The information will be updated dynamically

- d. Aarogya Setu/ITIHAS MeiTY

ITIHAS is a platform that uses data from Aarogya Setu and also data provided by NDMA.

All aggregate data in ITIHAS is anonymised. ITIHAS can share Covid score at sub-post office level and Aarogya Setu Syndromic mapping.

Contact Person:

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