

“One-Health” from Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)



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Over the past few decades, numerous infectious diseases of global concern have emerged, such as the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003, the H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The globalization of health risks highlights the value of pre-emptive preparedness for future pandemics and enunciates a One Health approach. While we are threatened by the emergence of infectious diseases, around 75% of which are estimated to be zoonotic origin, the integrated and unifying approach of One Health offers a platform to optimize the health outcomes of humans, animals, and the environment, truly encompassing the spirit of the Indian philosophy ‘Vasudeva Kutumbakom’ or the ‘One world family’.

The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is implementing National One Health Programme for Prevention and Control of Zoonoses (NOHPPCZ) in the country through the Centre for One Health. It has been working over the years on One Health in the domain of rabies, vector-borne diseases and in Sector-Connect, their new field epidemiology training programme.

The upcoming National One Health Institute at Nagpur will be a collaborative Institute where multiple departments will work. Prominent among them will be NCDC and ICMR. Under the leadership of Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, One Health Mission is being launched to prepare India for future pandemics and outbreaks. The Mission will focus on bringing together several Government Departments responsible for human health, livestock and wildlife to conduct R&D for integrated surveillance and development of medical countermeasures to emerging diseases.

Recently, we have come together to set up joint outbreak investigation teams, comprising experts from all sectors, who will investigate outbreaks using the one health approach. We are collaboratively networking selected BSL3 labs to respond to outbreaks between several departments so that outbreaks samples can be tested on priority basis as a national network. We have also planned models of surveillance to be set up in zones of higher human-animal-environment that NCDC can take up and expand. Our latest combined data sharing initiative between VRDLs and IDSP is a testimonial of our solidarity.

I extend my heartiest congratulations to NCDC at the launch of its open access, peer-reviewed double-blinded multidisciplinary, quarterly e-Journal “Epi-Dis-PHERE” that would advance public health in the areas of research, policy, practice, and education with articles on special focus on inter sectoral collaborations. The first issue of the journal is aptly named “Uniting for One Health” and places into context the need for collaboration in India to achieve sustainable health outcomes. The journal will offer a platform for experts to share their experiences and collective wisdom and aid in knowledge dissemination. The content will also promote dissemination of the current best practices in the one health domain and benefit practitioners and policy makers alike. I extend my wishes to NCDC in the endeavor for documenting and sharing knowledge on one health practices in India through their e-Journal.