



CCMB offers training of ICMR-approved testing centres to adopt a faster COVID-19 testing method

Hyderabad, 3rd May, 2021: The dry swab based direct RT-PCR method of COVID-19 testing, developed by CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad and approved by ICMR can now be adopted in testing labs of the country. This method is easier to carry out than the current procedures, and can ramp up testing by 2-3 fold using the current infrastructure in the testing labs.

CCMB has offered to train ICMR-approved government as well as private COVID-19 testing centres to help them adopt this method. It aims to train 500 testing centres across India, starting this week on. Most of these sessions will be online to reach out to centres out of Hyderabad. The willing centres can book their slots here: http://e-portal.ccmb.res.in/dst_slotbooking/. Those in and around Hyderabad can also avail physical training sessions by reaching out to the Director at CCMB.

This method needs no Viral Transport Medium for sending samples from sample collection centres to testing centres. This requires much lesser sample packing, and no contamination between samples. In this method, the RNA isolation steps have been replaced by a single-step addition of an easily available reagent. Extract from this step can be directly used for RT-PCR without compromising on the quality of results. These make the tests faster, cheaper, safer for the healthcare workers, and increase throughput with existing resources and setup. The technology has been licensed to various healthcare companies such as Apollo Hospitals, Meril Life, Spice Health and Capital Health Pvt Ltd to manufacture and commercialize these testing kits.

“India is struggling with a steep surge in COVID-19 cases. The testing centres are overwhelmed with the number of samples that they have to test. It is an absolute need to increase our testing capacity within the existing setup. We are positive that the dry swab based direct RT-PCR method will help in the cause immensely,” says Dr Rakesh Mishra, Advisor, CCMB.