

**REPORT OF COVID RELATED ACTIVITIES OF ACHUTHA MENON CENTRE FOR  
HEALTH SCIENCE STUDIES  
SREE CHITRA TIRUNAL INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY**

The report of activities covers the period of **January - May 24<sup>th</sup> 2020**.

The report is divided into three broad areas of contribution of the AMC team. This includes:

- Involvement in support to COVID-19 related activities of the Institute.
- Involvement in support to COVID-19 related activities of the Government of Kerala.
- Involvement in support to COVID-19 related activities to the Government of India.
- Academic activity
- Media and Outreach

**Involvement in the support to COVID-19 related activities of the Institute.**

1. February 1<sup>st</sup> – Sensitisation on COVID-19 for staff of SCT – staff from all three wings joined. BMT wing staff and field staff from Wayanad joined over zoom (**Dr. Biju took the lead in arranging**).
2. February onwards AMC staff interacted with various staff of SCT individually and in small groups to clear doubts and raise awareness on COVID.
3. Three members of AMCHSS are members of the COVID Cell of the institute – **Dr. Sankara Sarma, Dr. Biju Soman and Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde**. This cell coordinates and makes decision regarding all COVID related decisions in the institute.
4. The AMC team contributed to coordinating the public health and other aspects of the institute's response to one of our staff member testing COVID-19 positive. This included the following:
  - a. Coordination of contact tracing activities and decision – **Dr. Biju Soman** was part the team of faculty that did this activity.
  - b. Re-classification of contacts into high risk and low risk – **Dr. Biju Soman** lead the team that did this.
  - c. Development of Rapid Survey tool to survey the whole of the institute – **Dr. Biju Soman, Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde** contributed to development of the tool.
  - d. Designing the Campus Cohort study protocol – which follows those who were in quarantine as contacts of our positive faculty. **Dr. Biju Soman and Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde** in association with Team from NIE, Chennai
  - e. Formation and initial support of nearly 700 members whatsapp support group for staff – **Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde and MPH students of Batch of 2019**. Later support was taken over by other faculty and staff.
  - f. Intensive telephone counselling and support to those in quarantine – team led by **Dr. Ravi Prasad Varma and PhD and MPH students of 2019 batch**.
  - g. Development of material for support of those in quarantine – **Dr. Jeemon, Dr. Manju and Dr. Ravi Prasad Varma**.
  - h. **Dr. Ravi Prasad Varma** has joined the Institute ICT and is providing public health inputs. He is supporting the Social Work Department in daily screening of patients, developing protocols and monitoring implementation of these in the Hospital and AMC campus.
  - i. Developed an English (**Dr. Ravi Prasad Varma, Dr. Srikanth, Dr. Manju Nair, Dr. Jissa VT**) and Malayalam (**by Ravi Prasad Varma, Jissa,**

**Rajalakshmi (MPH student))** webinar on epidemiological basis of COVID-19 in Malayalam for ICT.

- j. **Dr. Mala Ramanathan** as member secretary of IEC – April 1, 2020: Developed two SOPs for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic situation and implemented them for the IEC functioning. Put in place expedited IEC review protocols. IEC reviews are now being processed in 72 hours. These protocols were developed based on the ICMR guidelines (Of 2017) section on Ethics in Humanitarian / Disaster situations. Proposals received under the COVID-19 protocol of IEC: 7. Number of proposals approved: 6.
- k. **Dr. Ravi Prasad Varma** - Preparing COVID-19 high-risk district list every alternate day to facilitate patient triaging.
- l. **Dr. Ravi Prasad Varma** - Contributed to the SCTIMST-Infection Control Manual for COVID-19 (dated 22-04-2020)

### **Involvement in supporting Government of Kerala**

1. **Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde, Professor, AMC** was appointed on to the State Government Expert Committee on COVID-19. This committee is chaired by Dr. Ekbal, Member State Planning Commission.
2. AMC team consisting of **Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde, Dr. Sankara Sarma, Dr. Biju Soman and Dr. Jissa VT** helped develop three proposal submitted to Government of Kerala as Technical support, these are protocols for epidemiological and sero-prevalence surveys. These proposals include:
  - a. Epidemiological studies on COVID-19 in Kerala, India **SCT COVID STUDY GROUP 001**.
  - b. Sero-epidemiological study of COVID-19 in State/Union Territory, India: Among community members, contacts and health care workers. **SCT COVID STUDY GROUP 002**
  - c. An exploration of sero-prevalence of COVID-19 in Kerala using facility-based samples. **SCT COVID STUDY GROUP 002a**
3. **Dr. Manju Nair** developed and submitted a comprehensive sentinel surveillance programme for the Trivandrum District Disaster Management Authority.

### **Involvement in support to Central Government**

1. **Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde, Professor, AMC** was appointed to the National Task Force on COVID by ICMR. He was appointed as a member of the Operations Research / Implementation Research Group.
2. **Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde, Professor, AMC** was appointed as convenor of the Health Systems Working sub-group of the OR/IR Task force of the ICMR.

### **Academic activity**

1. Converted all MPH teaching to video conference-based platform.
2. Converted all seminars of MPH students submitting their theses through video conferencing-based platforms.
3. Publications from AMCHSS:
  - a. **Varma RP**. Alcohol withdrawal management during the Covid-19 lockdown in Kerala. *Indian J Med Ethics*. 2020;V(2):105-106. doi:10.20529/IJME.2020.042
  - b. **Singh G, Srinivas G, Jyothi EK, Gayatri LK, Gaitonde R, Soman B**. The Sree Chitra experience in containing the first outbreak of COVID-19 in a healthcare setting in India. *Indian J Public Health* 2020;64:S1-S4.
4. Publications being prepared as part of COVID activities –
  - a. Support to faculty member who was infected with COVID to write a first person case report for publication.

- b. Completing a manuscript on the Campus Cohort investigation for submission – it will be the first report of an outbreak investigation of COVID in a health care institution in India. (Team leading first drafting – Dr. Biju Soman, Dr. Gurpreet Singh (PhD student), Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde.
  - c. Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde is part of team writing a conceptual framework of COVID control activities to be submitted for upcoming COVID special issue of IJPH.
5. Projects initiated related to COVID 19 by AMCHSS:
- a. **Dr. Mala Ramanathan** - 'Primary Health Care Preparedness and LSGI reponse in the context of COVID-19 in Kerala'. This study is being undertaken with the collaboration of the Director, Kerala Institute for Local Administration, Trissur
  - b. **Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde**. Innovations during COVID-19 pandemic in India: A repository. Project submitted to ICMR. Status – Approved by National Task Force.
6. Blogs and Media – Public outreach activities
- a. **Panniyammakal Jeemon**. The link between smoking and COVID 19; should we wait for more evidence to quit smoking?  
<https://heartofcovid.com/2020/04/08/the-link-between-smoking-and-covid-19-should-we-wait-for-more-evidence-to-quit-smoking/>
  - b. **Panniyammakal Jeemon**. Should cardiovascular disease comorbidity scare you during the COVID-19 season?  
<https://heartofcovid.com/2020/04/01/should-cardiovascular-disease-comorbidity-scare-you-during-the-covid-19-season/>
  - c. **Dr. Biju Soman** has appeared in the Malayalam press
  - d. **Dr. Rakhal Gaitonde** has given Interviews quotes of which featured in different articles in Times of India Delhi edition, Times of India Kochi Edition and The Hindu Trivandrum edition, and The Print.
  - e. **Dr. Manju Nair** and **Dr. Ravi Prasad Varma** - Prepared information leaflet ' *Corona Athijeevanam - lockdowninu sesham* ' for women's groups.
  - f. **Dr. Manju Nair** and **Dr. Ravi Prasad Varma** - Podcast in Malayalam - *Covid 19 varathirikkanulla panchathanthrangal* prepared. Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and Mahl (Lakshadweep) languages being prepared.
  - g. **Ramanathan, M**, Udaya S Mishra and **Bevin Vijayan**, Covid-19 and elderly care: Japan registered the low mortality despite highest ratio of 65+ population. May 7 2020. URL: <https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/health/1038306-covid-19-and-elderly-care-japan-registered-low-mortality-despite-highest-ratio-of-65-population>

26.05.2020