

India Coronavirus Dispatch: Falling cases a challenge for Phase-3 trials

How the pandemic will shape the budget, research on persisting symptoms, Bharat Biotech's intranasal vaccine-news relevant to India's fight against Covid-19

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Declining caseload a huge positive, but a challenge for Phase-3 trials

While the declining caseload since mid-September is a major source of encouragement in the efforts to contain Covid-19, it poses a challenge in carrying out phase-3 trials, according to a report in The Hindu.

The declining caseload will be a challenge because of the requirement of certain cases to develop in the trial after vaccine administration to understand the efficacy, Dr Giridhara Babu, an epidemiologist at the Public Health Foundation of India, Bengaluru told The Hindu. In order to reach the sample size efficiently, Babu

suggests recruiting participants based on an antibody test, and to have two distinct groups of people to participate (both infected and susceptible) in trials to understand the efficacy in both groups.

Professor of Microbiology at CMC Vellore, Gagandeep Kang said vaccine makers can carry out phase III trials outside India and efficacy results from such trials would be accepted by India's regulator for vaccine approval. China had to rely on other countries to carry out phase III trials of its vaccines as the virus spread had slowed sharply. [Read more here](#)

Covid-19 likely to be front and centre in 2021 Union Budget

The Covid-19 pandemic has likely upended millions of lives in India and ravaged the national economy. The first coronavirus case was reported in the country in late January, but it was the early days of the outbreak and the 2020 Union Budget made no mention of it. The 2021 Union Budget, however, will be profoundly shaped by the pandemic-driven economic and health crises, a report in IndiaToday said.

Economists say that the government is likely to make special expenditure provisions in this year's budget. Madan Sabnavis, chief economic at Care Ratings said the Centre will have to accommodate a "sizable" expenditure towards vaccination of the general public. Spending on public health infrastructure will remain a key focus, according to the report.

The report said, in the past 10 years, India's spending on public health has hovered between 1.2-1.6% of its GDP. This is relatively low compared to countries such as China (3.2 per cent), USA (8.5 per cent), and Germany (9.4 per cent). The country's health spending on a per capita basis is also low at \$69, while private spending per person is nearly triple that at \$183, according to World Bank data. [Read more](#)

Three in four patients report persisting symptoms six months post-infection: Lancet study

A study published in The Lancet journal that examined long-term effects of Covid-19 has revealed that three in four hospitalised Covid-19 patients have at least one persisting symptom six months after first contracting the virus, according to a report in The Print.

The study involved 1,733 Covid-19 patients in Wuhan who recovered from the disease between 7 January and 29 May last year. The patients were followed up 186 days later, on average. Fatigue or muscle weakness was the most common symptom, persisting in 63 per cent of the patients who had had Covid-19. One in four of the patients frequently experienced difficulty sleeping. One in four people also reported anxiety or depression.

Few studies have been carried out about the long-term effects of Covid-19. The ones that have been conducted examined a small number of infections with a 3-month follow-up typically. [Read more here](#)

Bharat Biotech's intranasal vaccine: The highlights you need to know

Bharat Biotech, whose Covid-19 inoculant Covaxin has been approved for restricted use, announced it would start Phase clinical I trial for an intranasal vaccine. This report from TimesNow brings you the ins and outs of the vaccine candidate.

Bharat Biotech's intranasal Covid-19 vaccine called 'BBV154' is adenovirus-based. The regimen will be single-dose. The drugmaker said the vaccine has shown unprecedented levels of protection in mice studies. The data has been published in science journals Cell and Nature. [Read more here](#)

ICMR studies if Covaxin can work against the UK strain

Experiments are underway at ICMR's National Institute of Virology to understand if Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, which has received regulatory approval for restricted use, can protect against the new UK strain, according to a report in The New Indian Express. [Read more here](#)