

Minutes of the meeting of 'ICMR Tribal Health Forum' held at the Vector Control Research Center, Puducherry on 15th April, 2013

Quarterly meeting of Tribal Health Research Forum was organized by VCRC on 15 April, 2013. The meeting was chaired by Dr. V.M. Katoch, Secretary DHR and DG, ICMR, New Delhi. The following members attended the meeting:

1. Dr.V.M.Katoch *Chairperson*
Director-General, ICMR and DHR,
Government of India
2. Shri Jawahar
Sr. Deputy Director General (Administration)
3. Smt. Dharitri Panda, ICAS
Sr. Financial Advisor, ICMR
4. Dr. Neeru Singh *Coordinator*
Director, RMRC(T), Jabalpur, MP
4. Dr. Jambulingam
Director, VCRC, Puducherry
5. Scientists from different RMRC Centres and other ICMR institutes also attended the meeting (Annexure I).

Dr. Jambulingam , Director, VCRC welcomed the Secretary, DHR and DG, ICMR, Dr. V.M. Katoch, Mr. Jawahar, Mrs. Dharitri Panda, Mr. Sanjiv Datta, and other participants and requested Dr.V.M.Katoch to chair the meeting and conduct the proceedings.

In his opening remarks Secretary, DHR and DG, ICMR Dr. V.M. Katoch outlined the need for concrete and cohesive efforts towards improving the Tribal health. He stressed the urgency for introspection to estimate output of the THRF activities. He reiterated the need for making measurable progress and set goals of priority rather than slogans. Further, he stressed that the research activities carried out by each institute/center under Flagship program (THRF) must designate a person for THRF related activities.

Mr. Jawahar, Sr. DDG welcomed all the members of the participating centers and emphasized the need for Tribal empowerment. He requested that the forum should ensure preservation of culture and traditions of the tribes.

Smt. Dharitri Panda, Sr. FA requested all the members to set goals, prioritize, evaluate and monitor their efforts towards THRF activities as the need of the hour due to impending financial crunch. She also suggested that the meetings could be held every six months

Mr. Sanjiv Datta, Advisor, ICMR suggested that all the members of the participating centres should re-prioritize their programs to match the requirement with renewed focus and energy.. Further he advised the scientists to disseminate the outcome of the studies to the beneficiaries.

Dr. Neeru Singh, Director, RMRCT, Jabalpur, Coordinator of the tribal health research forum reviewed the outcome of previous meetings on tribal health forum held at different Institutions. She pointed out that the attendance at VCRC was cent per cent with all members being represented.

Comments/ Suggestions

Dr. Katoch, suggested that forum should enlist its achievements through books/electronic reports. He pointed out that in 1st year THRF was formed, 2nd year should be for action and 3rd year should reveal outcome. In that sequence, he questioned whether the forum has provided the deliverables. If the answer is in the negative, then he pointed out that the forum has to kick start priority technologies and pilot test them. He mentioned that year 2013 has to be the year of penetration, intervention and packages.

PRESENTATIONS ON THE WORK DONE BY DIFFERENT INSTITUTES, ESPECIALLY ON TRIBALS

The project presentations from the participating institutes and the recommendations are as follows.

1. Division of Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases (ECD), ICMR

Dr. Ayan Jha, Scientist C, and Programme Officer for Tribal Health, represented the Division of ECD. He briefly presented the various projects being funded under the Tribal Sub Plan and number of concept proposals approved with timeframe. He informed that about 30 ad-hoc full proposals were expected. The Division is also planning to initiate a multi-centric study on TB with NIRT, Chennai as the lead institute. The protocol for this TB study has been finalized by NIRT, and after approval of the THRF, will be circulated to all PIs.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG, ICMR appreciated the work accomplished and asked to continue the process of review of ad-hoc proposals and the multi-centric TB study within the scheduled time frame.

2. Division of Non-Communicable of Diseases (NCD), ICMR

Dr. Prashant Mathur, Scientist presented the timeline of activities and action taken by the division.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG suggested providing details of participating centers/institutes etc

2. with respect to DMRC I said that two Division of Nutrition, New Delhi

Dr. G. S. Toteja, Director, DMRC and Head division of Nutrition outlined the activities and progress of NNMB unit and its expansion, and draft of Compendium on Tribal. He further informed that compendium will be based on Census 2011 data if available or will be prepared based on 2001 data. Regarding activities of DMRC, he

informed that studies as recommended in tribal forum have been prepared and will be placed before SAC of DMRC on 28th June 2013.

Comments/ Suggestions: No specific comments.

3. Division of Reproductive and Child Health

Dr. Malabika Roy, Head of RCH presented the outline of activities and poor response of concept notes to call for proposals. She sought extension of time for invited proposals

Comments/ Suggestions

Dr. V. M. Katoch negated the idea of extension of time for concept proposals and suggested evaluation and sanction of proposals received. He further advised the division to identify key issues and mechanisms of tribal needs in 7 zones. He also suggested that larger programs need to be carried forward and expanded to all centers. Senior FA in her comments suggested that RFT targets to be linked to RFD and ideology.

4. Vector Control Research Centre (VCRC), Puducheri

Dr. Jambulingam, Director VCRC presented on the progress on studies and past activities.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG appreciated the progress of activities, evaluation and coordination between partner institutes. He reiterated the need for setting up of deadlines between RMRC, Bhubaneswar, VCRC and NIMR with milestone targets. He also suggested invitation of dermatologists to address the issue of cutaneous leishmaniasis

5. Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Jabalpur

Dr. Neeru Singh, Director introduced the activities and progress by the center related to THRF on major health problems of Tribals in Madhya Pradesh. Dr. VG Rao, Scientist F highlighted the TB activities of the center.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG suggested that need of the hour is to engage traditional healers. He further suggested that Dr. Tiwari, GOI should be approached to share areas of activities to try "Flourosis package" and can be supplemented as part of translation Research and additional intervention. He also indicated that North East region needs to be included in the program with Dr. Kulshreshta to strengthen knowledge base.

Regarding TB activities, DG suggested that type of drugs needs to be identified and NIRT, Chennai should address the structural needs of the states regarding health facilities.

6. National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad

Dr. A. Laxmaiah presented NNMB expansion program and progress. He also presented progress and status of various activities of NIN relating to tribals.

Comments/ Suggestions

The DG, ICMR Dr. V. M. Katoch suggested that NNMB unit should be established in J & K State. He further advised that efforts should be made to identify the effect after dissemination of Nutrition activities on tribes and conduct workshops etc. He urged the need to include IEC to make dynamic impact.

7. National Institute of Research in Tuberculosis, Chennai.

Dr. Beena Thomas, Scientist presented the activities of the center and a standard protocol for TB was presented.

Comments/ Suggestions: The Standard Protocol was approved

9. National Institute of Immunohaematology, (NIIH)

Dr. Ghosh, Director introduced the activities and Drs. Roshan Colah, Scientist and Malay Mukherjee, Scientist presented the progress of activities.

Comments/ Suggestions: No Specific Comments

10. Regional Medical Research Centre, Orissa

Dr. S K Kar, Director and Dr. Dibedi Scientist 'C' presented the action taken by the center relating THRF activities.

Comments/ Suggestions: Carry out pretesting as projected.

11. Regional Medical Research Centre, Dibrugarh

Dr. Mahanta, Director and Dr. Mahopatra Scientist 'F' presented the action taken by the center relating THRF activities and enumerated the success of Parogomoniasis control.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG appreciated the presentations of on-going studies and suggested that two pronged approach should be made to tackle salt related hypertension among tea garden workers. Ensure behavioral changes through cardiologists through newer projects. In response to work on cancer, he suggested that there is a need to identify whether behavioral changes can be brought about with the help of medical colleges.

12. Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Port Blair

Dr. Vijayachari, Director introduced the activities of the center followed by presentation by Dr.Sriram, Scientist

Comments/ Suggestions

DG questioned whether the efforts made by the center were making any impact? Further, he indicated that the center should ensure prevention of traditional habits and culture.

13. National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai

Dr. Mahendale, Director informed about the activities of the center and Dr.Tarun Bhatnagar enumerated the action taken and new proposal on "Process Evaluation of Malaria Control Strategies in Tribal Regions of India".

Comments/ Suggestions

DG suggested that in malaria control programs all ICMR centers should be involved and Dr. Neena Valecha, Director NIMR should request inputs from National program.

14. National Institute of Malaria Research (NIMR), New Delhi

Dr. Neena Valecha, Director, NIMR presented the progress and activities of NIMR.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG suggested that if comprehensive case management works then it should be used all over the country. Further, copy of project proposals should be shared with centers working on the same areas to encourage synergy.

15. Regional Medical Research Centre, Belgaum

Dr. Subarna Roy, Scientist ‘E’ presented the activities and progress of their center and indicated the effect of active collaboration with Dr. Dinesh of NIN, Hyderabad.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG questioned the rational of their interference with activities of AYUSH. The presentation was appreciated by the members of the forum and there were no major suggestions with regard to the presentation. However Dr.V.M.Katoch suggested to develop studies related to the un-etiological factors causing fever/ pyroxia and suggested RMRC, Bhubaneshwar to build up a composite programme and prepare a format to resolve this issue.

16. Rajendra Memorial Research Institute of Medical Sciences (RMRIMS), Patna

Dr. Neena Verma, Scientist ‘E’ presented the project activities on Study of Hemoglobinopathy in tribal population of Bihar with community intervention (IEC) and preliminary study done in Jamui district of Bihar.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG instructed that the center should seek advice of pioneers in the field and Co-Investigators to make their projects successful and effective.

17. Centre for Research in Medical Entomology, Madurai

Dr. Phillips, Scientist ‘C’ presented the initiatives and action taken report of the center.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG instructed that the center should continue their collaborative studies.

18. National Institute of Medical Statistics, New Delhi

Dr. Arvind Pandey, Director introduced the activities of the center and **Dr. Tulsi Adhikari, Scientist** presented the progress of activities.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG queried on what message the study provides to male/husbands? Dr. Mahendale, Director, NIE questioned the feasibility of the study indicating that it was a clinical trial and tough study.

19. National JALMA Institute for Leprosy & Other Mycobacterial Diseases

Dr. Chauhan, Scientist 'C' (JALMA), discussed the activities and initiatives of their center that falls in purview of THRF and sought to work in collaboration with RMRCT, Jabalpur and Gwalior Medical College to initiate Genotyping studies.

Comments/ Suggestions

DG suggested that Sahariyas of Kota, rajasthan need to be studied and the study would have to include IEC activities.

General Suggestions and Comments

DG in the concluding session opined that

ATR should set deadlines and responsibilities

NIE/NIMS Will help to in providing advice, interface and with students

Launch IEC programs

Identify ground realities; recommend simple interventions that are cost effective

For present provide prevention strategies for hypertension and Diabetes

Provide intermediate and long term goals

Identify the limits of ICMR involvement in Hemoglobinopathies, TB and malaria for condensation of goals and management. Further, he suggested that Health systems research has not been touched upon and ECD and NCD should provide the number of projects sanctioned by them in the next meeting. He also indicated that premature death of Tribals less than 50 years of age is a matter of concern and needs attention. NGOs working on specific diseases need to be involved and encouraged to apply for projects. Finally achievement based booklet to be published and circulated to chief secretaries of states. Sr. DDG and FA can be approached for any need. The venue of the next annual meetings was decided as Desert Medicine Research Center, Jodhpur wherein, comprehensive book on activities of THRF will be presented as draft. Dr. Ghosh, Director NIIH suggested that reports of NIN should be circulated to all medical colleges.

Dr. Gunashekar, Scientist F proposed a vote of thanks.

Annexure I

LIST OF THE SCIENTISTS ATTENDED THE MEETING

1. Dr.K.Ghosh, Director, National Institute of Immunology, Mumbai,
2. Dr. G. S. Toteja, Director, Desert Medicine Research Center, Jodhpur and Head Division of Nutrition, New Delhi.
3. Dr. S.K. Kar, Director, RMRC, Bhubaneswar, Orissa
4. Dr.J.Mahanta, Director, RMRC, Dibrugarh, Assam
5. Dr. Pradeep Das, Director, Rajendra Memorial Research Centre, Patna
6. Dr. P. Vijayachari, Director, RMRC, Port Blair, A&N
7. Dr. Soumya Swaminthan, Director, National Institute of Research in Tuberculosis, Chennai.
8. Dr.Neena Valecha, Director, NIMR, New Delhi
9. Dr. Arvind Pandey, Director, National Institute of Medical Statistics, New Delhi
10. Dr. Mahendale, Director, National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai
11. Dr. Malabika Roy, Head, Division of Reproductive and Child Health, New Delhi
12. Dr.P.K.Mohapatra, Scientist F
13. Dr. Roshan Colah, Scientist F
14. Dr.K.Gunasekaran, Scientist F
15. Dr. A. Laxmaiah, Scientist F
16. Dr. L.K.Das, Scientist, F
17. Dr.V.G.Rao, Scientist, F
18. Dr.Neena Varma, Scientist E
19. Dr. Dr. Subarna Roy, Scientist E
20. Dr. Dinesh Kumar, Scientist E
21. Dr.J.Yuvaraj, Scientist E
22. Dr. S. Thilagavathy, Scientist E
23. Dr.B.Dinesh Kumar, Scientist E
24. Dr.Neelima Mishra, Scientist D
25. Dr. Shalini Singh Scientist-D
26. Dr. Malay Mukherjee, Scientist D
27. Dr. Prasanth Mathur, Scientist D
28. Dr.Raja Subramaniam, Scientist D
29. Dr.A.S.Kerketta, Scientist D
30. Dr.Pradeep A Menon, Scientist D

31. Dr.S.Subramanian, Scientist D
32. Dr.S.S.Sahu, Scientist-D
33. Dr.R.Srinivasan, Scientist-D
34. Dr.Tarun Bhatnagar, Scientist C
35. Dr.Ayan Jha, Scientist C
36. Dr. Dr. B.Dwibedi, Scientist C
37. Dr.Roshan K Topno, Scientist C
38. Dr.Subba Rao, Scientist C
39. Dr. Chauhan, Scientist C
40. Dr. Phillip Sameul, Scientist C
41. Dr. Tulsi Adhikari, Scientist C
42. Dr.Beena E Thomas Scientist B
43. Dr.A.N.Shriram, Scientist B
44. Shri C.S.Namboodri PS to Secretary, DHR and DG, ICMR
45. Shri Vinod Bhatt PS to Secretary, DHR and DG, ICMR