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CSIR-IGIB, SpiceHealth intensifies screening for new mutant strains of COVID-19

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In a move that would ensure early action in containing new mutant variants of COVID-19 detected in the UK and other countries, SpiceHealth has tied-up with CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB) to set up a portable testing laboratory for genome sequencing at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport for all positive samples from international travellers.

Under this programme, all positive samples from international travellers arriving at Delhi's IGI airport would be sequenced at the airport sequencing laboratory, to ensure early action in containing new mutant variants that have increased transmissibility.

CSIR's experience using portable sequencers suggests that it is possible to identify variants within 48 hours of a person arriving in India and testing positive. Sequencing at the airport could thus save as much as five days of potential transmission, reducing the spread of the imported variant strains.

Avani Singh, CEO, SpiceHealth, said, "The new mutant strains of Coronavirus need immediate and effective attention. Our collaboration with CSIR-IGIB is a significant step towards early detection of new mutant variants."

Dr Shekhar C Mande, DG, CSIR, said, "I compliment SpiceHealth for being instrumental in introducing the dry swab direct RT-PCR testing developed by CSIR-CCMB, at SpiceHeath's mobile labs."

Dr Anurag Agrawal, Director, CSIR-IGIB, said, "We plan to use it to help in better monitoring and managing the SARS CoV2 pandemic, but this is just a beginning towards its many potential clinical and public health applications."

In its bid to offer strong resistance against COVID-19, the Company tied up with CSIR-CCMB for conducting the game changing dry swab RT-PCR tests at SpiceHealth's mobile testing laboratories.