

Dr Dangs Lab launches bacteriophage sensitivity testing in India

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To ease access to phage therapy, an alternative to antibiotics, for people suffering from antibiotic-resistant and chronic bacterial infections



Dr Dangs Lab and Vitalis Phage Therapy, India's first phage therapy initiative, have recently joined hands to bring diagnostic bacteriophage sensitivity testing to India.

This pioneering initiative will enable people suffering from bacterial infections to get bacteriophage susceptibility testing done locally in India, making it easier for them to access phage therapy offered by the Eliava Phage Therapy Center, associated with the 97-year-old Eliava Institute of Bacteriophages, Microbiology and Virology in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Thousands of individuals worldwide have benefited from phage therapy over the past few years and over the last couple of years, Vitalis Phage Therapy has enabled dozens of patients from India with conditions such as chronic UTI, kidney infections, prostatitis, respiratory infections to benefit from phage therapy from the Eliava Phage Therapy Center.

Bacteriophages, or simply phages, are viruses that are natural predators of bacteria. They are the most abundant organisms in the Earth's biosphere and are present in every environment where bacteria are present – even inside the human body. Though phage therapy was first developed over a hundred years ago, the last century has mainly witnessed treatments for infections with antibiotics. Phage therapy is an alternative approach to treat bacterial infections & it can be used to treat antibiotic-resistant infections.

Antibiotic resistance or antimicrobial resistance (AMR) due to rampant misuse of antibiotics, will eventually evolve to be a major threat to humanity. This novel initiative will increase accessibility to phage therapy as an extremely effective alternative for treatment of antibiotic-resistant infections.

"We are very excited to provide Bacteriophage Susceptibility Testing at Dr. Dangs Lab for patients seeking phage treatment through Vitalis Phage Therapy. In line with the lab's motto of, "Creating Value over Volumes" we are immensely hopeful of

the power of Phage sensitivity testing and subsequent therapy to help the huge number of people suffering from unresolved bacterial infections. The cost of phage susceptibility testing will be Rs 850 & the services, for sample collection will be offered in all major cities pan India”, says Dr. Arjun Dang, CEO, Dr. Dangs Lab, New Delhi.

In order to administer phage therapy, it is necessary to first test the patient's samples from the infected site to establish the sensitivity of the pathogenic bacteria to the phages, to know which phages will be effective in treating the infection.

“In our experience of enabling phage treatment for patients, we realised that samples sent from India to Georgia for phage sensitivity testing would take up to 2 weeks to reach. This made phage therapy out of reach for patients suffering from acute infections, and we at Vitalis Phage Therapy were committed to help patients overcome this hurdle. With testing now available locally at Dr. Dangs Lab, patients will be able to get their culture and phage susceptibility report in a matter of days, making the diagnostic process quicker and more timely for their treatment”, says Pranav Johri, Founder of Vitalis Phage Therapy, the official partner of the Eliava Phage Therapy Center and Eliava Institute in India.

“Local testing of clinical bacterial isolates on susceptibility to therapeutic bacteriophage preparations within a local diagnostic laboratory as opposed to sending the isolates to Georgia will significantly speed up the process of phage selection and subsequent phage treatment. Providing this activity locally thus will help medical staff accelerate their treatment of a patient battling bacterial infections,” writes Dr. Mzia Kutateladze, Director of the Eliava Institute.