

India's first Biobank for heart failure research opens at SCTIMST

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NHFB will help improve the diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of heart failure



National Heart Failure Biobank (NHFB) that would collect blood, biopsies, and clinical data as a guide to future therapies was recently inaugurated at the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) in Thiruvananthapuram.

Prof Balram Bhargava, Secretary, Department of Health Research (DHR) and DG, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) virtually inaugurated the NHFB.

According to Bhargava, the biobank will provide insights into heart diseases and heart failure among Indian children and adults, which are different from that seen in the West.

Dr VK Saraswat, President of SCTIMST and Member, NITI Aayog, in his message, hoped that the NHFB would prove helpful in understanding molecular pathways and would improve the diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of heart failure.

The storage facilities include -20, -80-degree mechanical freezers and a liquid nitrogen storage system which can store biosamples at – 140 degrees perpetually for years. Currently, there are facilities to store nearly 25000 biosamples.

The biosamples include the blood, serum, tissue samples obtained during open-heart surgery and peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs) and genomic DNA collected from heart failure patients. The biobank activity is supervised by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) with a member from ICMR.

The Biobank at SCTIMST has already signed an MOU with InStem Bangalore for collaborative research in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, which runs in families with thickening heart muscles.