

Kasturba Medical College, Manipal takes lead in National Task Force for Melioidosis

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Melioidosis, also called Whitmore's disease, is an infectious disease that can infect humans or animals, caused by *Burkholderia pseudomallei*



Kasturba Medical College, Manipal through its Centre for Emerging and Tropical Diseases (CETD) have taken keen interest in spreading awareness about melioidosis and improved case detections by advanced diagnostic facilities for the last 17 years, leveraging the expertise and learnings of a team of scientists from this sole research and diagnostic centre in India.

CETD has been accorded the status of Referral centre in this project. It has been envisioned that their well-planned & supervised capacity building effort with hands-on training will help in detecting a greater number of melioidosis cases in the country and result in genome sequences of the strains as novel initiative.

It may further embolden the laboratories to diagnose a large number of tropical emerging diseases other than melioidosis. Further, a curated indigenous database of *Burkholderia pseudomallei* genomes will enable researchers across the country to initiate drug-discovery and/or vaccine development studies.

This will thus not only help tackle this 'silent killer' disease, but also help in formation of a strong base by developing public health facilities for the general population. In future, these centres will be equipped to act as nodal centres for their own states, while creating awareness through training and appropriate diagnosis.

Dr Chiranjay Mukhopadhyay, who is leading this national initiative at Kasturba Medical College, Manipal, said, "We appreciate and thank Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for their yearlong efforts in supporting several medical centres across 14 states for melioidosis diagnosis and management free of cost." I support the NCDC team to carry out environmental surveillance, while investigating the demise of an 18-year-old boy with neuromelioidosis from Udipi."