

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

Preface.....

National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE) was established on July 2, 1999 with the broad objectives of development of human resources in epidemiology and bio-statistics, networking of the various ICMR and non-ICMR Institutes at the national level for epidemiological purposes, and consultancy. The institute continues to grow in terms of resources building and is poised to have a building of its own at Ayyapakkam, Chennai.



Field Epidemiology Training Programme (FETP) leading to Master of Applied Epidemiology (MAE) from Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram is a flagship programme from NIE. It gives me immense pleasure to share with you that all the scholars have successfully completed MAE course and have gained assignments in the field of epidemiology, thus establishing the need for such courses. During the course of this year several outbreaks that had occurred in the country had been investigated by NIE. I take this opportunity to thank the officials of the health department of the respective states for their continued co-operation, without whom the outbreak investigations would not have been possible. The major outbreak investigations were, post-tsunami outbreak of measles in Tamil Nadu, Hepatitis E in Andhra Pradesh and Gastro-enteritis in West Bengal. The epidemiological investigations have proved worthwhile in identifying the actual causes leading to the outbreaks.

With the discontinuation of production of Nerve tissue Rabies Vaccine (NTRV) for antirabies, the focus is now on Tissue culture antirabies vaccine (TCARV). The study undertaken to assess feasibility, safety and immunogenicity for the TCARV through intradermal route has shown positive results and additional testing is being carried out.

Use of Interferon and Glycyrrhizin combination therapy for the management of Chronic Hepatitis C has shown encouraging results. This has prompted ICMR to initiate two more similar studies.

NIE is the national co-ordinating center for multicentric trial to assess the efficacy and effectiveness of 6 month Uniform multibacillary MDT, for all types of leprosy through general health services. It is also a co-ordinating center for WHO sponsored trial of single dose of ROM. Follow-up studies on patients who have completed Uniform MDT regimen are in progress.

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Several studies relating to STIs/HIV/AIDS risk factors had been undertaken by the institute. Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), STD clinic attendees, HIV infected persons and the rural community people residing adjacent to truck stops, form the subjects of these studies.

The only community based Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre (VCTC) in Tamil Nadu has been established by NIE at Avadi, a suburban area, sponsored by Tamil Nadu State AIDS Control Society. The usefulness of this center is proven by the increased attendance of the clients.

On 26th December 2004, tsunami waves struck the Eastern coastal areas of India and Andaman Nicobar islands. Our epidemiology teams were activated immediately and started functioning from 27th December itself. They helped in establishing the disease surveillance systems, investigated active and impending epidemics, and supplemented in providing relief and control measures. Director-General, ICMR, identified NIE as the co-ordinating institute for the ICMR tsunami activities.

I am happy to state that the good track record of NIE has attracted collaborative partnership from private sectors for research activities. A study on cardio-vascular disease risk factors in industrial workers was carried out in Brakes India Ltd. in collaboration with Sundaram Medical Foundation Hospital, Chennai. Similar studies were being carried out in Wheels India Ltd. Experience gained has helped NIE initiate CVD risk factors study in rural community.

A collaborative project with Hindustan Levers Research Centre, Mumbai, on the impact of water quality intervention on the risk of diarrhoeal diseases in children, is in progress.

On the request from Govt. of India, ICMR has undertaken a study on Cause of Death by Verbal Autopsy in India and NIE was involved for undertaking this study in the southern region. This study has churned out large amount of data on mortality. This may further be used for in-depth studies and model building exercises.

On the infrastructure front, buildings for NIE are expected to be completed by May 2006 which will considerably bring relief to the ever-growing space constraint and provide the necessary facilities for the growth of NIE to the ICMR School of Public Health.

With the continued support of NIE staff and the personal interest by the DG, ICMR, I am sure this institute will grow further to fulfill the needs in the areas of health of the people and in further growth of health related knowledge.

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