

PREFACE

During the current reporting year, the Centre has been striving hard to regain the momentum of its research activities, which was disrupted due to tsunami. We thought that we needed longer interactions with eminent scientists to make necessary corrections in the course of our research. Fortunately we were able to obtain the guidance and advice of a few expert scientists. With their inputs, during several interactive sessions with the scientists, new projects have been formulated with appropriate protocols. The methodologies of some of the ongoing projects were modified so that these projects ultimately meet the set objectives. Although the impact of the advice of the previous SAC meeting and that of the senior scientists who visited the Centre thereafter might not be reflected in this report, as these events happened towards the end of the reporting period, I am sure the positive impact would be visible in the reports of the coming years.

In leptospirosis, the ongoing surveillance study in a rural area in South Andaman continued this year also with the primary objective of studying the clinical spectrum of the disease at the point where the patients seek medical care for the first time and to characterize the circulating strains of leptospire in these areas. Evaluation of a few tests, particularly PCR on serum samples and urine samples continued this year also to increase the sample sizes so that the estimates of indices are more precise. Some encouraging preliminary results have been obtained in the study of metalloproteinases in leptospire and the project is continuing. Preliminary work on construction of a genomic library of leptospira has been initiated, though the results are not reported in this document. In Diarrhoeal Diseases, the project on molecular epidemiology of Shigellosis has concluded and, as advised by the previous SAC, a new comprehensive project that encompasses the epidemiology, clinical aspects, antibiotic resistance and molecular epidemiology has been developed and submitted for funding. The results of the ongoing project on surveillance of childhood diarrhoea in Port Blair are being reported here, but the project has been modified according to the suggestions of the SAC and the scientists who visited the Centre afterwards. The project on antenatal screening of HBsAg and prevention of perinatal transmission of hepatitis B through active/passive immunization, which was at a standstill due to the displacement of the study population after tsunami, has been revived and the progress is being presented in the current report.

These are the salient points of the research work conducted during the reporting period. I am hopeful that with the advice and guidance we received from the members of the SAC as well as from other senior scientists, the quality of the research work would improve in the coming years.

I thank the Chairman and the members of the SAC, all the senior scientists who took time to visit the Centre and interact with our scientists, the Director General and senior colleagues at the headquarters, the Director of Health Services and the doctors and the Andaman and Nicobar Administration for their active support and cooperation. I present this report before you for your critical evaluation and advice.

**Port Blair
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**P. Vijayachari
Officer-in-Charge**